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D I S Q U I S I T I O N S

R E L A T I N G   T O

M A T T E R   A N D   S P I R I T.







Oprano del.

Bartolozzi Sculp.

*I have laid the foundation & another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. 1 Cor. 3.10.*

# QUISITIONS

RELATING TO

## MATTER AND SPIRIT.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

The History of the Philosophical Doctrine concerning the Origin of the Soul, and the Nature of Matter; with its Influence on Christianity, especially with respect to the Doctrine of the Pre-existence of Christ.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

V O L. I.

THE SECOND EDITION, IMPROVED AND ENLARGED,

Si quelqu'un demontreroit jamais, qu'*l'âme est materielle*, loin de s'en alarmer, il faudroit admirer la puissance, qui auroit donné à la matière la capacité de penser.

BONNETT. *Palingenesie.* Vol. I. p. 50.

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MDCCLXXXII.



TO THE  
Rev. WILLIAM GRAHAM.

DEAR SIR,

I TAKE the liberty to dedicate to you a work, written with greater freedom than any that I have hitherto offered to the Public. An enemy of bigotry, and a distinguished champion for freedom of thinking, in very trying situations, as you have long been, I am satisfied you will not be displeased with any effort of the spirit with which you have ever been animated, and which you have done so much to inspire.

Educated, as you know I was, in the very straitest principles of *reputed orthodoxy*, and zealous as I once was for every tenet of the system, it was, in a great measure, by your example and encouragement, at my entrance on theological inquiries, that I adventured to think for myself on subjects

of the greatest importance; and that I have been able, in the course of a slow and laborious investigation, to free myself from many vulgar prejudices, and to reject many gross corruptions, as I now deem them, of that religion which is the best gift of God to man, and to attain to the degree of conviction and satisfaction of mind which I now enjoy. Every obligation of this important kind I hope I shall always remember with peculiar pleasure and gratitude.

After a sufficiently tempestuous life, you are now enjoying yourself in a *tranquil retirement*, and seeing others contend with the storm, the fury of which you have borne, and which you have, in some measure, broken, and rendered less hazardous to those who come after you. My time of withdrawing from this busy scene is not yet come; but while I feel myself animated with your *love of truth*, I shall enjoy an enviable composure even in the midst of the tempest; and I shall endeavour to re-

lieve

lieve the severity of these more serious pursuits, with those of *philosophy*, as you have done with those of *classical literature*.

Whatever you may think of some parts of my *reasoning* in the principal work, now presented to you, I am confident you will approve of the main *object* of it, and especially the *Sequel*. You have long been an assertor of the *proper unitarian doctrine*, and cannot be displeased with my endeavouring to trace to their source in heathen antiquity, those capital corruptions of christianity—the *Athanasian* and *Arian* opinions.

The proper *unity of God*, the maker and governor of the world, and the proper *humanity of Christ*, you justly consider as respectively essential to natural and revealed religion; and consequently entertain a reasonable suspicion and dread of any opinions that infringe upon them; and the more venerable those opinions have become on account of their *antiquity*, or the *numbers*, or worldly *power*, by which they are sup-

ported, so much the more do they excite your indignation and zeal.

I rejoice with you, on account of such a prevalence of free inquiry, and good sense in matters of religion, in the present age, as cannot fail, in the end, to overturn the *antichristian systems* that have been permitted by divine providence to prevail so long in the christian world, and consequently (though probably in a remote period) the *antichristian tyrannies* that have supported them.

I am,

with the greatest esteem,

Dear Sir,

your affectionate friend,

and christian brother,

CALNE,  
July, 1777.

J. PRIESTLEY.

T H E  
P R E F A C E.

IT may appear something extraordinary, but it is strictly true, that but a very few years ago, I was so far from having any thoughts of writing on the subject of this publication, that I had not even adopted the opinion contended for in it. Like the generality of christians in the present age, I had always taken it for granted, that man had a soul distinct from his body, though with many modern divines, I supposed it to be incapable of exerting any of its faculties, independently of the body; and I believed this soul to be a substance so intirely distinct from matter, as to have no property in common with it. Of this several traces may be found in the first edition of my *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, and probably in some of my other writings.

Not but that I very well remember many doubts occurred to me on the subject of the intimate union of two substances so intirely

heterogeneous as the soul and the body were represented to be. And even when I first entered upon metaphysical inquiries, I thought that either the *material*, or *immaterial* part of the universal system was superfluous. But not giving any very particular attention to a subject on which I could get no light, I relapsed into the general hypothesis of *two intirely distinct and independent principles in man*, connected in some unknown and incomprehensible manner ; and I acquiesced in it as well as I could.

Father Boscovich and Mr. Michell's new theory concerning matter, of which I gave an account in my *History of Discoveries relating to Vision, &c.* was calculated, as will be seen, to throw the greatest light on the constituent principles of human nature ; but it was a considerable time before I could bring myself really to receive a doctrine so new, though so strictly philosophical ; and besides I had nothing of a metaphysical nature in contemplation at that time.

It was upon resuming some of my metaphysical speculations, to which (like most other persons of a studious turn) I had been exceedingly attached in the early period of my literary

rary life (when I published my *Examination of the Principles of Common Sense*, as maintained by Dr. Beattie, &c. and when I republished Dr. Hartley's *Theory of the Human Mind*) that I first entertained a serious doubt of the truth of the vulgar hypothesis ; and writing, as I always do, with great frankness, I freely expressed that doubt, exactly as it then stood in my mind ; and I think it is hardly possible to express any thing with more hesitation and diffidence. The paragraph I allude to is the following :

“ I am rather inclined to think, though the  
“ subject is beyond our comprehension at pre-  
“ sent, that man does not consist of *two princi-*  
“ *ples* so essentially different from one another  
“ as *matter* and *spirit*, which are always de-  
“ scribed as having no one common property,  
“ by means of which they can affect, or act  
“ upon each other; the one occupying space,  
“ and the other not only not occupying the  
“ least imaginable portion of space, but in-  
“ capable of bearing any relation to it; inso-  
“ much that, properly speaking, my mind is  
“ no more in my body, than it is in the moon.  
“ I rather think that the whole man is of some  
“ *uniform composition*; and that the property of  
“ *perception*, as well as the other powers that

“ are termed *mental*, is the result (whether necessary, or not) of such an organisical structure as that of the brain: consequently, that the whole man becomes extinct at death, and that we have no hope of surviving the grave, but what is derived from the scheme of revelation.”

I little imagined that such a paragraph as this could have given the alarm that I presently found it had done. My *doubts* were instantly converted into a *full persuasion*, and the cry against me as an *unbeliever*, and a *favourer of atheism*, was exceedingly general and loud; and was echoed from quarters where more candour and better discernment might have been expected. With what *intention* this was done, is best known to the authors of such gross defamation. I shall proceed to relate the *consequences* of it, for which they are, in some measure, answerable.

This odium, which I had thus unexpectedly drawn upon myself, served to engage my more particular attention to the subject of it; and this at length terminated in a full conviction, that the doubt I had expressed was well founded. Continuing to reflect upon the subject, I became satisfied that, if we suffer ourselves

selves to be guided in our inquiries by the universally acknowledged *rules of philosophizing*, we shall find ourselves intirely unauthorized to admit any thing in man besides that *body* which is the object of our senses; and my own observations, and my collection of opinions on the subject, presently swelled to the bulk that is now before the Public.

These observations I now lay before the reader (whatever be his disposition of mind with respect to myself, or my subject) with the same openness and simplicity with which I first proposed my simple doubt; and, judging from what has passed, I may imagine that, if the *simple doubt* occasioned so great an alarm and outcry, the unreserved avowal of my *intire conviction* on the subject will cause a much greater alarm. And yet in this apprehension I may possibly be mistaken; and as, on the former occasion, the offence was taken when I was least aware of it, the popular clamour may have spent itself, and may begin to subside, on the very occasion on which I imagined it would be inflamed to the utmost.

Men of reason and religion may attend to the arguments that I have produced, from *reason* and the *scriptures*, in support of my hypothesis,

thesis, and may be satisfied that my opinion is neither irrational in itself, nor destitute of countenance in the sacred writings, and therefore certainly not *dangerous*; and the favour of *the few* may silence the clamour of *the many*.

On the other hand, the tide of popular prejudice may rise still higher, and though I have spent the greatest part of my life in the study and defence of christianity, the suspicion of my being an unbeliever, and an underminer of all religion, may be confirmed; and, like Mr. Hobbes, I may for generations lie under the imputation of absolute atheism.

Be this as it may; I feel a great *present ease* in the idea of publishing my thoughts with the most unreserved freedom on this important subject; and I am not without hopes that, though many well meaning christians may, for some time, rank me with unbelievers, some unbelievers, of a philosophical turn of mind, may, on this very account, be prevailed upon to attend to the subject; and finding the true system of revelation to be quite another thing than they had imagined it to be, and infinitely more *consonant to the real appearances of nature*, may think it worth their while to consider it in various *other lights*, and attend to the

*evidence*

evidence that myself and others have produced in favour of it; and so, from being infidels (in consequence of not understanding what christianity really is, and not sufficiently examining the evidence of it, which is generally the case) they may become rational christians.

A very few converts of this kind would, in my estimation, compensate for a great deal of odium among professed christians. Their indignation will do neither themselves, nor me, much harm; whereas the conviction of the *reasonableness* and *truth* of christianity, in a few really thinking and intelligent unbelievers, might do the greatest good; and even contribute to put a stop, sooner than otherwise would be done, to the infidelity of the philosophical part of the world.

To effect this, in any tolerable degree, would be an object indeed; and the man who should in any measure succeed in it, could not be said to have lived, to have written, or to have been calumniated, in vain. I am fully satisfied that it will be to no purpose to expect the conversion of philosophical unbelievers to that system of opinions which now generally passes for christianity, and especially that which is *established* in the different countries of Europe under

der that name. Because conclusions contrary to all *natural appearances*, will never be admitted by them to be true.

So very free and undisguised an attack upon an opinion almost universally deemed to be of the utmost importance to all religion, natural or revealed, may be expected to rouse the zeal of many friends to the prevailing system, and produce *defences* of it. This is what I *expect*, and what I *wish*; and as I am prepared for it, I will take this opportunity of acquainting my readers with the rule I have laid down to myself on similar occasions, and to which I propose to adhere in this.

I by no means think it right to resolve, with Mr. Hume, to take no notice of any antagonist whatever. I might as well refuse to make any reply to a person who should address himself to me in conversation, after I had thought proper to direct my discourse to him: for in printed publications we, in fact, address all the world. A *pertinent*, and especially a *decent*, reply, requires, I think, a respectful notice, though a very *absurd* and *impertinent* one may justly, as in conversation, be treated with neglect. The Public, in whose presence every thing passes, will judge for

for themselves, whether a man refuses to make a reply because he is not able to make a good one, or because he has some sufficient reason for not doing it. It must, however, be acknowledged, that even the general and public opinion *may* be so unreasonable, that a writer may be justified in paying no attention to it, and in appealing to the more mature judgment of posterity.

It is, I presume, sufficiently evident from the strain of my publications, that *general applause* has not been my object. I know that they are rather calculated to narrow the circle of my friends, though I hope they will leave me now for any valuable purpose in life. I shall not, therefore, feel myself disposed to take notice of *every* attack upon this treatise, and especially such as may be *anonymous*. But if the principles advanced in it be controverted by any person whose name, as a metaphysician, or divine, is *generally respected*, I do assure him that I will take more or less notice of him; either acknowledging any mistakes I may be convinced I have fallen into, or endeavouring to convince him of his. Even a *very able*, or *very plausible*, anonymous antagonist shall not be neglected. For,

as

as in the controversy which I began with the Scotch writers, I really wish to have the subject freely and fully canvassed.

There are subjects on which, after a reasonable attention to them, a man may be authorized to *make up his mind*, so as to be justified in refusing even to lose his time in reading what may be addressed to him on it; because he may have sufficient ground to presume it cannot contain any thing materially new to him. This is what most protestants will avow with respect to the popish doctrine of *transubstantiation*, and I avow it with respect to the doctrine of the *trinity*, and various other articles of Calvinistic theology. I have at this time by me several tracts, particularly *Letters* addressed to me, on those subjects, and which have been much applauded, which I have not looked into, and which I profess I never intend to look into. But this is not the case with respect to the subject of this treatise. I will carefully read, for some time at least, whatever shall be addressed to me, or the Public, on the subject, provided the writers take care that their publications be transmitted, or properly announced, to me.

I do

I do not, as many persons would, except against all answers that may be written in a manner not perfectly consistent with the laws of *decorum*, or those in which I may think myself treated with too much *asperity*, or *ridicule*. I would have every man write as he actually *feels* at the time. There are few controversial writers, who, when the warmth of debate is over, may not see something of this kind to blame themselves for ; but those who are acquainted with human nature, will make allowance for such *human imperfections*, and attend to the *merits of the case* ; and it may be depended upon, that the real *weight of argument* is the thing that will decide in the end, when every thing of a *personal nature*, in the course of the controversy, will be forgotten.

If I were disposed, as I am not, to plead for *mercy*, I would alledge the extreme unpopularity of my side of the question ; and say that, a man who writes with the full tide of popular opinion in his favour, has no occasion for any *indirect method* of bearing down his antagonist. It is the man whose opinions are unpopular that stands in the most need of the arts of address, and in him they would be most excusable. But, notwithstanding this,

I shall

I shall trust my very unpopular argument to its native strength, or weakness, without any artificial support whatever.

As I have extended this Preface thus far, I shall extend it a little farther, in order to answer an objection that may be made to religion, natural or revealed, from the very great *differences of opinion* among the professors of it, on such subjects as are here discussed, and from the *animosity* with which we may happen to debate about them. Now this does not at all arise from the *nature of the subject*, any farther than its greater importance necessarily, and justly, makes it more interesting, but from the *nature of man*, the same principles operating in a similar manner on similar occasions.

Men do not differ more, or dispute with more warmth, on subjects of *religion*, or *metaphysics*, than they do on those of *civil government*, *philology*, or even *philosophy*, which, one would imagine, *a priori*, must always be the calmest thing in the world, and could never occasion an angry debate. But by giving much *attention* to any thing, we may *interest* ourselves in any thing, and wherever that is the case, an intemperate warmth is the inevitable consequence. Besides, it is not in human

man nature not to feel one's self more or less interested in the support of an opinion which we have once advanced as *our own*. And whenever any thing *personal* mixes in a debate (and it is barely possible that it should not do so) it is, in fact, a regard for *our reputation* and *character* that is the *stimulus*, and nothing necessarily belonging to the *subject*.

But the circumstance that chiefly interests the passions, and inflames the animosity of those who dispute on the *subject* of religion, is the *worldly emolument* annexed to the profession of particular tenets, in the civil establishments of christianity. Did the civil magistrate shew no preference to one mode of religion more than to another, and was there no other motive concealed under the mask of *zeal for religion*, there would be no great reason to complain of its intemperance.

Few persons are, from their situation and experience, better qualified to speak on this subject than myself, few persons having been engaged in a greater variety of pursuits, or in a scene of more *various controversy*; and I see no reason whatever for accusing *religion*, more than any thing else, of exciting jealousy, ha-

tred, or any other immediate cause of animosity and angry debate.

Many of my friends are frequently expressing their wishes, that I had nothing to do with *theology*, or *metaphysics*, flattering me with the prospect of a considerable degree of unenvied reputation as a *philosopher*. But the most rancorous opposition, and the most unprovoked abuse that I have met with, has been from persons who never knew any thing of me but in the character of a philosopher. And, though I will venture to say, that it is not possible to write with more frankness than I have always done; describing, in the most natural manner, the very progress of my thoughts with respect to every discovery of consequence, and, upon all occasions, giving rather too much, than too little, to any person who has favoured me with the least assistance, as all my philosophical writings evidence, I have been treated as a notorious *plagiary* \*. There are even many persons, not destitute of name and character themselves, who cannot bear to hear me spoken of, as having any pretensions to philosophy, without a sneer; and who think

\* See my Pamphlet intitled *Philosophical Empiricism.*

in my publications on the subject a disgrace to philosophy, and to my country.

Can I, then, have a more ungracious reception among *divines*, *metaphysicians*, or *philologists*? In short, having no better treatment to expect in any walk of literature, I shall, without distinction, apply myself to any pursuit to which my attention shall be more particularly drawn. I have friends, and I have enemies, in every class of men to whom I have been introduced. All the former I shall be happy to oblige in their turn, but I cannot be with any of them always. The latter I neither absolutely despise, nor greatly dread. Those of them who are disposed to be civil to me shall meet with civility from me in return, and as to those of them who are otherwise disposed, I shall behave to them as I may happen to be affected at the time.

But, mindful of the motto which I have chosen for my coat of arms, *Ars longa, vita brevis*, I shall devote as much of my time as possible to the *pursuit of truth*, and as little as I can help to the mere *defence of it*, or of *myself*. The former is a noble and sublime exercise of the mind, exalting the soul, and improving the temper; whereas in the latter,

though conducted with the greatest caution, there is a risk of debasing the mind, hurting the temper, and sacrificing our peace. For, controversy is, at best, a state of war.

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THE historical account of the system of heathenism concerning the pre-existence of souls in general, and of the pre-existence of the soul of Christ in particular, which was derived from it, I had once thought of reserving for my *Historical View of the Corruptions of Christianity*, which was originally intended to be the last part of my *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*. But as it was actually composed during my investigation of this subject, as it rose out of it, and is strictly connected with it, I have thought proper to subjoin it, by way of *Sequel*.

Both the parts of this work, taken together, will shew, in a striking light, the very extensive mischief that has been done to revealed religion by the introduction of this part of the system of heathenism, concerning the soul. And when the proper extent of this *foreign system* is seen, it may be hoped, that many

many persons who have rejected a part of it, will see equal reason to reject the whole. And, for my own part, I am satisfied that it is only by purging away the whole of this *corrupt leaven*, that we can recover the pristine simplicity and purity of our most excellent and truly rational, though much abused, religion.

Athanasianism, I think, will sufficiently appear to have been merely Oriental philosophy in its origin, and afterwards to have become more absurd than the original tenets of that philosophy ; and Arianism is only the same philosophy altered, free indeed from the palpable *contradictions* of Athanasianism, but it is, in other respects, no less remote from the proper scheme of christianity. I shall think myself happy if, by this or any other of my writings, I be able to throw the least new light upon a subject which has so near a relation to the fundamental principles of the christian system.

*Explanation of the FRONTISPICE.*

THE idea is taken from 1 Cor. iii. 12. where different persons are represented as having built with different materials, on the solid foundation of christianity, as laid by Christ and the apostles; and that what was built with wood, and other base materials, would be consumed by fire, while the rest would stand. Our Saviour, who revealed the future state of his church to the apostle John, is represented as shewing him this circumstance relating to it. The application of this scene to the object of this work, is sufficiently obvious.

P R E F A C E  
TO THE  
S E C O N D E D I T I O N.

IT is with much satisfaction that I publish a second edition of this work, having found the first to have been much better received than there seemed to be any reason to expect. It was, particularly, the means of discovering that many persons, the most serious christians, had either actually held the opinion I here contend for, or were well affected towards it, though they had not been disposed to write, or even to speak on the subject, on account of its extreme unpopularity. Hereafter, I hope that *materialism*, obnoxious as the term has hitherto been, will be so far from being peculiar to *unbelievers*, that it will be the favourite tenet of *rational christians*; being perfectly consonant to the appearances of nature, and giving a peculiar value to the scheme of revelation.

I have now, I think, done all the justice to the subject that I am capable of; having not only written thus largely upon it, but having also, as I professed myself ready to do, entered into the defence of it with persons the best qualified to controvert it. This, at least, must be allowed to be the case with respect to Dr. Price; who, at the same time, that he is one of the ablest writers of the age, is one of the most candid, and the best of men. The result of our friendly discussion of this subject is published in a volume by itself; but from that work I have now transferred into this the *Additional Illustrations*, which I took that opportunity of publishing, and have inserted them in the places to which they belong. When the *Discussion* is reprinted, they shall be left out of it.

I do not think it will be expected of me that I should take notice of every thing that has been written in answer to this work; but I must not pass by two sections in Mr. De Luc's, *Histoire de la Terre*, in which he professedly animadverts upon this publication of mine. Not that he has advanced any thing that is *new* on the subject (indeed he professes that his arguments are the same in

in substance with those of Dr. Price, and to them I have already replied in a manner with which I am sufficiently satisfied) but because his work is more likely to be read by foreigners. I have also a respect for the writer, as an excellent man, with whom I have the happiness of being acquainted, and whose intentions I am persuaded are the best that any man can have.

In the first place, I must observe that he charges me unjustly with considering only that kind of *immaterialism* which is most open to objection, and which he professedly disclaims, viz. that which makes spirit to have no common property with matter, and therefore to be incapable of any mutual action with it; whereas I have particularly considered that, and every other possible idea of spirit. But I have shewn that the progress from the original notion of it, which was that of *an attenuated kind of matter*, to that which made it to occupy no portion of space, and to bear no relation to it, was natural and necessary; and that, absurd as Mr. De Luc thinks this notion of spirit to be, it is, in fact, better covered from refutation than any other. The idea of spirits having extension, which is

is maintained by Mr. De Luc, I have considered at large in Section VIII. and I wish him to attend to what is there advanced.

He considers spirit as having *some* common property with matter; but let him consider what common property it *must* be, that can enable it to *act upon* matter. It cannot be mere *extension*, for then space and matter would be capable of a proper mutual action. And if, as he maintains, matter must have *solidity*, in order to its being possessed of the properties of attraction and repulsion, by which alone its action upon other matter is shewn, a spirit must have solidity also, in order to its being capable of the same kind of action.

To say, in general, that matter and spirit must have some common property, but that this common property is altogether *unknown* to us, cannot give any satisfaction. For till it be defined, I am at liberty to say that such unknown common property may be impossible in nature. Besides, those who, with Mr. De Luc, maintain the *impenetrability* of matter, always suppose that this is the foundation of all its other properties; for they say that, otherwise, they would be the

the properties of *nothing*. It must, therefore, be the foundation of this unknown property which it has in common with spirit. Consequently, they must, if they argue consistently, suppose this property of impenetrability to be the foundation of this same unknown property in spirit, which makes it capable of mutual action with matter.

Indeed, I can see no ground on which we can suppose that spirit is not impenetrable, but on the supposition that matter is destitute of it also, if these two substances be capable of mutual action. I wish Mr. De Luc, and others who think as he does, would attentively consider this obvious train of reasoning; and they will perceive that this new notion of spirit, viz. its having some property in common with matter, is absolutely untenable, as much so as that which supposes it to have no common property with it whatever, and to bear no relation to space. This they reject as chimerical, but they must take refuge in it, if they maintain *two principles* in man at all.

The only objection that Mr. De Luc, or any other person, can have to the hypothesis of man being wholly material, is that he can

can perceive no *connexion* between *matter* and *sensation*, or *thought*; but neither can he perceive any connexion between *solidity*, or *impenetrability*, and the other known properties of matter, such as *cohesion*, *gravitation*, &c. Here is, in fact, precisely the same difficulty as in the connexion between matter and sensation, only it has not been so much attended to.

This truly valuable writer employs another whole section of his work, to convince me that I have done wrong in *publishing* my opinion on this subject; but I cannot say that his arguments have more weight with me in this case, than in the other. He urges very strongly that, when persons' minds are unhinged with respect to their opinions on subjects of importance, they are apt to give into universal scepticism. But this doctrine should have been preached to Luther, to Calvin, and the other reformers from popery. If their conduct be justifiable, I ask why may not we of this age humbly presume to be reformers from popery also? They are in fact the remains of the same fabric of corruptions that I would contribute to clear away. The building itself has happily been thrown

thrown down ; but I wish to dig up the very foundations, that they may never be built upon again.

He allows \*, that with a certain persuasion of the truth and importance of our opinions, we are justifiable in publishing them. I will then tell him, and I wonder he did not perceive it before, that I *have* this full persuasion. It is, I believe, as clear and full as that which he has of the contrary ; and therefore I am as justifiable in advancing my opinions, as he is in opposing them.

He says that I cannot plead in defence of my publication its importance to the defence of christianity, because he knows of no unbelievers who reject it on account of its being supposed to contain the doctrine of a soul ; and that many unbelievers expect a future state upon that principle, which it is therefore an injury to deprive them of. I answer that this might have been urged some time ago ; but at present I know of no unbelievers who have what can be truly called an *expectation* of a future life, on any principles. Nor can this be at all wonderful, after they have re-

\* Vol. I. p. 371.

jected revelation. Unbelievers abroad almost universally reject the opinion of a *soul* as absurd; and if Mr. De Luc only reads the *Système de la Nature*, he will see both this opinion, and also that of *philosophical liberty* (both of which the writer took for granted were essential to the system of revealed religion) reprobated with contempt. On the whole, the state of things is now such, that it appears to me to be absolutely necessary to abandon the notion of a *soul*, if we would retain christianity at all. And, happily, the principles of it are as repugnant to that notion, as those of any modern philosophy.

Lastly, Mr. De Luc seems willing to allow that I might be justified in publishing my opinions, provided I were *persecuted* for them, which he says I am not, except so far as I am excluded by them from all preferment in the church. And he takes this occasion of intimating, that I may not have sufficiently considered the necessity of some *establishment of religion*, in order to prevent controversy in the public exercises of it\*. I answer, that I wish to have nothing to do with any establish-

\* P. 355.

ment of religion by civil power. Our Saviour and the apostles certainly never looked to any such thing. They made no provision for it, and christianity did much better when, for three hundred years, it had no such support, than it has since done with it; notwithstanding there were sects now among christians in those ages, and therefore the inconvenience which Mr. De Luc so much dreads, must have affected them, as well as it does us.

But, in fact, establishments have not removed this inconvenience, if it be any. Few sectaries differ more from one another than members of the church of England do contrive to differ among themselves. The same is the case in the church of Rome. The doctrines publicly preached in the pulpits of the church of England are just as different from one another as those in dissenting congregations. Mr. De Luc is a foreigner, and therefore may not be acquainted with the fact, but it is notorious. I think, therefore, he would be at some loss to shew what *good end* the establishment of religion in this country answers. I will undertake to point out to him many *bad ones*. On the other hand, let him look to America, and say

say what evils have arisen from a want of establishments.

The author of *Letters on Materialism* has written a very elaborate defence of his principles in a treatise intitled, *Immaterialism delineated*, giving his name (JOSEPH BERINGTON) to the Public, and avowing himself a priest of the Roman Catholic church. As to the argument between us, I am willing to let it remain as it is, not thinking my system invalidated by what he has alledged; and his system of immaterialism is so peculiar (though perhaps the same with that of Mr. De Luc, if he would distinctly unfold it) that I imagine few will avail themselves of it.

I shall, therefore, only take this opportunity of expressing my sincere esteem for Mr. Berington, as a man of a truly liberal turn of mind, and cultivated understanding, though warped, as I must think him to be, by his education. I wish all Catholics were such as he is, and then the horror with which we now, and too justly, regard his religion, would vanish, and our invectives against it might be spared. His defence of the Catholics, published soon after the late riots in London, was seasonable and excellent.

There

There has appeared an anonymous answer both to Dr. Price and myself, under the title of *An Essay on the Nature and Existence of a Material World*, the author himself asserting that no such thing exists. On this subject I have advanced what I deem sufficient in my *Examination of the writings of Dr. Reid, &c.* I shall therefore only observe in this place, that this ingenious writer seems to have mistaken my argument, and by that means to have made his reply very easy. I do not produce a world at so small an expence as he says \*, and motion is not my sole material. I acknowledge with him, that power cannot mean any thing without a subject. But I do not therefore think that it follows, that the powers of attraction and repulsion must have a subject that has also the power or property of impenetrability. For then spirit, whose sole existence he contends for, and the divine being himself, could have no existence. But then, though we cannot speak of power but as existing in some thing or substance, it is equally true, that without those powers, that something is reduced to what, in our idea, is nothing at all.

\* P. 81.

As to what I advanced in the speculation concerning points, or *centers of attraction and repulsion*, on which alone all this writers objections are founded, though I do not think it is at all invalidated by any thing that he has advanced, I professed never to lay any stress upon it, as not being necessary to my argument, and I shall not think it worth while to defend it.

He says \*, that I seem to have fallen into a strange mistake, viz. that the form or shape of matter constitutes its essence ; whereas I only observed that solid matter must necessarily have some form or shape, and this no person can deny.

There has not been much written on my side of the question ; but I must not omit to mention the *Slight Sketch of the Controversy* between me and my opponents, the writer of which has well defended my hypothesis from the charge of infidelity. But I must more especially request the attention of my readers to the *Miscellaneous Observations on some points of Controversy between the Materialists and their Opponents*. This is the production of a masterly hand. It is only to be regretted

\* P. 92.

that

that he has not entered more largely into the subject: He is a writer from whom I own I have considerable expectations.

I think I have now sufficiently fulfilled my promise to the Public, viz. to reply, more or less largely, to whatever can be deemed worthy of any answer with respect to these *Disquisitions*, as well as to the *Treatise on Philosophical Necessity*. I shall now probably dismiss any farther particular attention to these subjects, and apply to other studies, which I know will be no displeasing information to some of my partial friends.

\*\*\* O N account of the references to the  
pages of the former edition of this work in  
the *Free Discussion*, and the various answers  
to it, and especially on account of the INDEX  
to both the volumes at the end of the *Dis-  
cussion*, I have thought proper to print a  
*Table of the corresponding pages* in the two  
editions of both the volumes, and also of  
the *corresponding parts* of this new edition,  
and the *Additional Illustrations* inserted in  
the *Discussion*.

## A

## C A T A L O G U E

o f

Some of the B O O K S that are quoted in  
this Treatise.

AS there are different editions of several of the books that I have quoted in this treatise, it will be proper to subjoin a list of the copies that I have made use of. It will also be proper to give more at length the titles of some books that I have frequently referred to very concisely, having sometimes mentioned nothing more than the name of the writer.

This has been more especially the case with Beausobre and Dupin, to both of whom, and especially the former, I am much indebted for my historical account of the opinions of the ancients. And I would observe in this place, that when I might, with no great trouble, have given those opinions from the original authors themselves, I have often chosen to give them, as reported by such writers as these. Because as these things have been very diffe-

rently represented, I was confident that the opinion of these writers would be more respected than my own, their learning and exactness being universally acknowledged ; and their views in writing having been different from mine, they cannot be suspected of partiality to my hypothesis.

F O L I O.

Tertulliani Opera, per Rigaltium. Paris 1675.  
 Divi Gregorii Papæ Opera. Paris 1551.  
 Justini Martyris Apologia, cum Notis  
 Thirlbii. - - - London 1722.  
 Arnobius Adversus Gentes, per Elmen-  
 horstium. - - - Hamb. 1610.  
 Dupin's History of Ecclesiastical Wri-  
 ters. - - - London 1696.  
 Joannis Damasceni Opera, per J. Billium.  
 Paris 1619.  
 Plutarchi Opera, per Xylandrum.  
 Frankfort 1620.  
 Anselmi Op. per Picardum. Col. Agrip. 1612.  
 Bernardi Opera, per Picardum. Paris 1609.  
 Athanasii Opera, Gr. Lat. 2 vols. Paris 1627.  
 Th. Aquinatis Summa - Paris 1631.

QUARTO.

## QUARTO.

Cudworth's Intellectual System.

Histoire Critique de Manichée, et du  
Manicheisme, per M. de Beausobre,  
2 vols. - Amsterd. 1734.

Cassiodori Opera. - Geneva 1637.

## OCTAVO.

Leland on the Advantage and Necessity  
of the Christian Revelation, 2 vols. 1768.

Petri Lombardi Sententiæ. Moguntiæ. 1632.

An Historical View of the Controversy  
concerning an intermediate State, and  
the separate Existence of the Soul,  
2d edition, - - - 1772.

Wollaston's Relig. of Nature, 7th edit. 1750.

Warburton's Divine Legation, 4 vols.  
4th edition. - - - 1754.

## DUODECIMO.

Moshemii Dissertationes ad Historiam  
Ecclesiasticam pertinentes. Altonaviæ 1733.  
Baxter's

Baxter's Matho, 2 vols. 3d edition. 1765.

L'Histoire de la Religion des Juifs, per  
Mr. Bafnage, 6 vols. Rotterdam 1707.

Les Voyages de Cyrus, avec un discours  
sur la Mythologie, par Mr. Ramsay.  
London 1757.

Th. Stanleii Historia Philosophiæ Ori-  
entalis, per J. Clericum. Amsterdam 1690.

Histoire Naturelle de l'ame, Traduite de  
l'Anglois de Mr. Charp. A la Haye. 1745.

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## A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

The less metaphysical reader may, without any inconvenience, intirely omit the three first sections of this work, and begin with section IV. For whatever be the essential properties of matter, man, according to the doctrine contended for in this work, is wholly composed of it, and his hope of a future life is only derived from revelation.

# DISQUISITIONS

RELATING TO

## E R R A T A.

Vol. I. page 39, line 17, for *from*, read *form*.  
p. 50, l. 2, — *charged*, — *changed*.

p. 67, l. 8, — *its*, — *his*.

page 275, line 5, from the bottom, for *Innocent*, read *John*.

Vol. II. page 14, line 5, from the bottom, dele *it*.

with respect to them, I shall here state the several subjects of inquiry as concisely, and with as much distinctness, as I can, and also inform the reader what my opinions concerning them really are.

It has generally been supposed that there are *two distinct kinds of substance* in human nature, and they have been distinguished by the terms *matter* and *spirit*. The former of these has been said to be possessed of the property of *extension*, viz. of length, breadth, and thickness, and also of *solidity* or *impenetrability*, but it is said to be naturally destitute of all powers whatever. The latter has of late

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#### A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

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# DISQUISITIONS

RELATING TO

## MATTER AND SPIRIT.

### The INTRODUCTION.

LEST any person should hastily misapprehend the *nature*, or *importance*, of the questions discussed in this treatise, or the manner in which I have decided for myself with respect to them, I shall here state the several subjects of inquiry as concisely, and with as much distinctness, as I can, and also inform the reader what my opinions concerning them really are.

It has generally been supposed that there are *two distinct kinds of substance* in human nature, and they have been distinguished by the terms *matter* and *spirit*. The former of these has been said to be possessed of the property of *extension*, viz. of length, breadth, and thickness, and also of *solidity* or *impenetrability*; but it is said to be naturally destitute of all powers whatever. The latter has of late

been defined to be a substance intirely *destitute of all extension, or relation to space*, so as to have no property in common with matter; and therefore to be properly *immaterial*, but to be possessed of the powers of *perception, intelligence, and self-motion*.

Matter is that kind of substance of which our *bodies* are composed, whereas the principle of perception and thought belonging to us is said to reside in a *spirit*, or immaterial principle, intimately united to the body; while the higher orders of intelligent beings, and especially the Divine Being, are said to be purely immaterial.

It is maintained in this treatise, that neither *matter* nor *spirit* (meaning by the latter the subject of sense and thought) correspond to the definitions above-mentioned. For that matter is not that *inert* substance that it has been supposed to be; that *powers of attraction or repulsion* are necessary to its very being, and that no part of it appears to be *impenetrable* to other parts. I therefore, define it to be a substance possessed of the property of *extension, and of powers of attraction or repulsion*. And since it has never yet been asserted, that the powers of *sensation and thought* are incompatible with these (*solidity, or impenetrability only, having been thought to be repugnant to them*) I therefore maintain, that we have no reason to suppose that there are in man two substances so distinct from each other, as have been represented.

It

It is likewise maintained in this treatise, that the notion of two substances that have no *common property*, and yet are capable of *intimate connection* and *mutual action*, is both absurd and *modern*; a substance without extension or relation to place being unknown both in the scriptures, and to all antiquity; the human mind for example, having till lately been thought to have a proper *presence in the body*, and a *proper motion* together with it; and the Divine Mind having always been represented as being, truly and properly *omnipresent*.

It is maintained, however, in the *SEQUEL* of this treatise, that such a distinction as the ancient philosophers *did* make between *matter* and *spirit*, though it was by no means such a distinction as was defined above (which does not admit of their having any common property) but a distinction which made the Supreme Mind the author of all good, and *matter* the source of all evil, that all inferior intelligences are *emanations from the Supreme Mind*, or made out of its substance, and that matter was reduced to its present form not by the Supreme Mind itself, but by *another intelligence*, a peculiar emanation from it, has been the real source of the greatest corruptions of true religion in all ages, many of which remain to this very day. It is here maintained, that this *system of philosophy*, and the *true system of revelation*, have always been diametrically opposite, and hostile to each other; and that the latter

can never be firmly established but upon the ruins of the former.

To promote this firm establishment of the system of *pure Revelation*, in opposition to that of a vain and absurd *philosophy*, here shewn to be so, is the true object of this work; in the perusal of which I beg the candour and patient attention of the judicious and philosophical reader.

It may not be unuseful to observe, that a distinction ought to be made with respect to the *relative importance* and *mutual subordination* of the different positions contended for in this treatise. The principal object is, to prove the uniform composition of man, or that what we call *mind*, or the principle of perception and thought, is not a substance distinct from the body, but the result of corporeal organization; and what I have advanced preliminary to this, concerning the *nature of matter*, though subservient to this argument, is by no means essential to it: for whatever matter be, I think I have sufficiently proved, that the human mind is nothing more than a modification of it.

Again, that man is wholly material is eminently subservient to the doctrine of the *proper*, or *mere humanity* of Christ. For, if no man has a soul distinct from his body, Christ, who, in all other respects, appeared as a man, could not have had a soul which had existed before his body; and the whole doctrine

## THE INTRODUCTION.

v

trine of the *pre-existence of souls* (of which the opinion of the pre-existence of Christ was a branch) will be effectually overturned. But I apprehend that, should I have failed in the proof of the materiality of man, arguments now remain, independent of this, to prove the non pre-existence of Christ, and of this doctrine having been introduced into christianity from the system of Oriental philosophy.

Lastly, the doctrine of *necessity*, maintained in the Appendix, is the immediate result of the doctrine of the materiality of man; for mechanism is the undoubted consequence of materialism. But whether man be wholly material or not, I apprehend that proof enough is advanced that every human volition is subject to certain fixed laws, and that the pretended *self-determining power* is altogether imaginary and impossible.

In short, it is my firm persuasion, that the three doctrines of *materialism*, of that which is commonly called *Socinianism*, and of philosophical *necessity*, are equally parts of *one system*, being equally founded on just observations of nature, and fair deductions from the scriptures; and that whoever shall duly consider their *connection*, and *dependence on one another*, will find no sufficient consistency in any general scheme of principles, that does not comprehend them all. At the same time, each of these doctrines stands on its own independent foundation, and is capable of such separate

demonstration, as subjects of a moral nature require, or admit.

I have advanced what has occurred to me in support of all the three parts of this system; confident that, in due time, the truth will bear down before it every opposing prejudice, how inveterate soever, and gain a firm establishment in the minds of all men.

## SECTION

## S E C T I O N I.

*Of the Nature and essential Properties of  
MATTER.*

I AM sorry to have occasion to begin these disquisitions on the nature of *matter and spirit*, with desiring my reader to recur to the universally received *rules of philosophizing*, such as are laid down by Sir Isaac Newton at the beginning of his third book of *Principia*. But though we have followed these rules pretty closely in other philosophical researches, it appears to me that we have, without any reason in the world, intirely deserted them in this. We have suffered ourselves to be guided by them in our inquiries into the causes of *particular appearances* in nature, but have formed our notions, with respect to the most general and comprehensive *principles* of human knowledge, without the least regard, nay, in direct contradiction, to them. And I am willing to hope, that when this is plainly pointed out, the inconsistency of our conduct in these cases cannot fail to strike us, and be the means of inducing the philosophical part of the world to tread back their steps, and set out again on the same maxims which they

have actually followed in their progress. For my own part, I profess an uniform and rigorous adherence to them ; but then I must require, that my own reasoning be tried by this, and by no other test.

The first of these rules, as laid down by Sir Isaac Newton, is that we are to *admit no more causes of things than are sufficient to explain appearances* ; and the second is that, *to the same effects we must, as far as possible, assign the same causes*.

So long as we follow these maxims, we may be confident that we walk on sure ground ; but the moment we depart from them, we wander in the regions of mere fancy, and are only entertaining ourselves and others with our own crude imaginations and conceits. By these plain rules, then, let us pursue our inquiries concerning the nature and connection of what have been called *material* and *thinking* substances ; concerning both which very great misconceptions seem to have very generally prevailed. And in the first place, let us attend to what metaphysicians and philosophers have advanced concerning *matter*, with respect to which (I mean its *fundamental properties*, and what may be absolutely affirmed or denied concerning them) there are very few who have so much as expressed the least doubt or uncertainty.

It is asserted, and generally taken for granted, that matter is necessarily a *solid*, or *impenetrable* substance, and naturally, or of itself, destitute

destitute of all *powers* whatever, as those of *attraction* or *repulsion*, &c.

That the vulgar should have formed these opinions, and acquiesce in them, I do not wonder; because there are *common appearances* enow which must necessarily lead them to form such a judgment. I press my hand against the table on which I am writing, and finding that I cannot penetrate it, and that I cannot push my hand into the place which it occupies, without first pushing it out of its place, I conclude that this table, and by analogy, *all matter, is impenetrable to other matter*. These first appearances are sufficient for them to conclude, that matter is necessarily *solid*, and incapable of yielding to the impression of other solid matter.

Again, I see a billiard table; and though I observe the balls upon it ever so long, I do not find any of them ever to change their places till they are pushed against; but that when once they are put in motion, they continue in that *new state* till they are stopped, either by some obstacle, or their own friction, which is in fact the result of a series of obstacles. And therefore I conclude, that, had there been no obstacle of any kind in the way, a ball would have continued in that state of *motion* (as, without being impelled by a foreign force, it would have continued in its former state of *rest*) for ever; having no power *within itself* to make any change in either of those states. I therefore conclude universally,

universally, that all matter, as such, is entirely destitute of *power*, and whatever is true of larger bodies with respect to each other, must be equally true of the smallest component parts of the same body; and consequently that all *attraction* or *repulsion* must be the effect of some *foreign power*, disposing either larger bodies, or their small component parts, to certain motions and tendencies, which otherwise they would not have had.

Such appearances as these, I imagine, have led to the conclusions above-mentioned, concerning the fundamental properties of matter. But then they are no more than *superficial appearances*, and therefore have led to superficial and false judgments; judgments which the *real appearances* will not authorize. For, in fact, when the appearances above-mentioned are considered in the new and just lights which late observations have thrown upon this part of philosophy, they will oblige us, if we adhere to the rules of philosophizing laid down above, to conclude that *resistance*, on which alone our opinion concerning the solidity or impenetrability of matter is founded, is never occasioned by *solid matter*, but by something of a very different nature, viz. a *power of repulsion* always acting at a real, and in general, an assignable distance from what we call the body itself.

It will also appear, from the most obvious considerations, that without a power of attraction, a power which has always been considered

sidered as something quite distinct from matter itself, there cannot be any such thing as matter; consequently, that this *foreign property*, as it has been called, is in reality absolutely essential to its very *nature* and *being*. For when we suppose bodies to be divested of it, they come to be *nothing at all*.

These positions, though not absolutely new, will appear paradoxical to most persons, but I beg a candid hearing; and I appeal to the allowed rules of philosophizing above-mentioned, being confident that they will sufficiently support my conclusions.

It will readily be allowed, that every body, as *solid* and *impenetrable*, must necessarily have some particular *form* or *shape*; but it is no less obvious, that no such *figured thing* can exist, unless the parts of which it consists have a *mutual attraction*, so as either to keep contiguous to, or preserve a certain distance from each other. This power of attraction, therefore, must be essential to the *actual existence* of all matter; since no substance can retain any *form* without it.

This argument equally affects the smallest atoms, as the largest bodies that are composed of them. An atom, by which I mean an ultimate component part of any gross body, is necessarily supposed to be perfectly solid, wholly impervious to any other atom; and it must also be round, or square, or of some other *determinate form*. But the parts of such a body (as this solid atom must be *divisible*, and therefore

therefore have parts) must be infinitely hard, and therefore must have powers of mutual attraction infinitely strong, or it could not hold together, that is, it could not exist as a *solid atom*. Take away the *power* therefore, and the solidity of the atom intirely disappears. In short, it is then no longer *matter*; being destitute of the fundamental properties of such a substance.

The reason why *solid extent* has been thought to be a complete definition of matter, is because it was imagined that we could separate from our idea of it every thing else belonging to it, and leave these two properties independent of the rest, and subsisting by themselves. But it was not considered, that, in consequence of taking away *attraction*, which is a *power*, *solidity* itself vanishes.

It will perhaps be said, that the particles of which any solid atom consists, may be conceived to be placed close together, without any mutual attraction between them. But then this atom will be intirely destitute of *compactness*, and hardness, which is requisite to its being *impenetrable*. Or if its parts be held together by some *foreign power*, it will still be true that *power* is necessary to its *solidity* and *essence*; since without it every particle would fall from each other, and be dispersed. And this being true of the ultimate particles, as well as of gross bodies, the consequence must be, that the whole substance will absolutely vanish. For as the large bodies

bodies would be dissolved without some principle of union, or some *power*, internal or external, so the parts of which they are composed would, in similar circumstances, be resolved into smaller parts, and consequently (the smallest parts being resolved in the same manner) the whole substance must absolutely disappear, nothing at all being left for the imagination to fix upon.

It will be observed, that, in this disquisition, I by no means suppose that these powers, which I make to be essential to the being of matter, and without which it cannot exist as a material substance at all, are *self-existent* in it. All that my argument amounts to, is, that from whatever source these powers are derived, or by whatever being they are communicated, matter cannot exist without them; and if that superior power, or being, withdraw its influence, the substance itself necessarily ceases to exist, or is annihilated. Whatever *solidity* any body has, it is possessed of it only in consequence of being endued with certain *powers*, and together with this *cause*, solidity, being no more than an *effect*, must cease, if there be any foundation for the plainest and best established rules of reasoning in philosophy.

Though Mr. Locke considered *solidity* as constituting the essence of matter (see *Essay*, &c. vol. ii. p. 141, where he says, "that substance that has the modification of solidity is matter") yet it is plain he had an idea

idea of something else, being in fact necessary to its cohesion. "If God," says he\*, "can not join things together by connections inconceivable to us, we must deny the consistence, and being, even of matter itself; since every particle of it having some bulk, has its parts connected by ways inconceivable by us."

Mr. Baxter, who, I believe, is considered as the ablest defender of the strict immaterial system, acknowledges that *powers of resistance and cohesion* are essential to matter, and absolutely make it a solid substance. But asserting, as he does, that these powers are the immediate agency of the Deity himself, it necessarily follows, that there is not in nature any such thing as *matter* distinct from the *Deity*, and *his operations*. An opinion in which Mr. Baxter's hypothesis necessarily terminates.

"Resistance," says Mr. Baxter†, "is fundamental in the nature of matter, and this itself is the power of the immaterial cause, indefinitely impressed upon, and exerted in, every possible part of matter. And since without this, these least parts could not cohere at all, or make a solid, making resistance, it appears that the power of this cause thus incessantly put forth, through all its possible parts, is that which constitutes the solidity and resistance

\* *Essay*, vol. ii. p. 148. † *Essay*, vol. ii. p. 345.

“ of matter.—Without this *foreign influence*  
“ to effect cohesion, and solidity in it, we  
“ could not conceive it to be at all a sub-  
“ stance.”

The opinion that all the powers of matter are nothing but the immediate agency of the Deity, is not peculiar to Mr. Baxter, though it is that which chiefly distinguishes his writings. It was held by the famous Jordano Bruno, as his sentiments are represented by the author of *Examen du Fatalisme*, “ All the “ motions,” says he, “ which strike our “ senses, the resistance which we find in mat-“ ter are the effect of the immediate action of “ God. The smallest parts of matter are “ united by a force; and as there is no active “ force in nature, but that of God; this being “ is the infinite force which unites all the “ parts of matter, an immense spring which “ is in continual action\*.” It is evident, however, that this philosopher considered the ultimate particles of matter as something different from any thing belonging to the Deity. But his principles, pursued to their proper extent, would have been the same with those of Mr. Baxter.

\* Vol i. p. 277.

## SECTION II.

Of IMPENETRABILITY, as ascribed to  
Matter.

AS philosophers have given *too little* to matter, in divesting it of all *powers*, without which I presume it has been proved that no such substance can exist, so it equally follows, from the plain rules of philosophizing above laid down, that they have ascribed *too much* to it, when they have advanced that *impenetrability* is one of its properties. Because, if there be any truth in late discoveries in philosophy, resistance is in most cases caused by something of a quite different nature from any thing *material*, or *solid*, viz. by a *power of repulsion* acting at a distance from the body to which it has been supposed to belong, and in no case whatever can it be proved that resistance is occasioned by any thing else.

Now if *resistance*, from which alone is derived the idea of *impenetrability*, is in most cases certainly, caused by *powers*, and in no case certainly by any thing else, the rules of philosophizing oblige us to suppose, that the cause of *all* resistance is *repulsive power*, and in no case whatever the thing that we have hitherto improperly termed *solid*, or *impenetrable matter*.

As

As all resistance can differ only in degree, this circumstance can only lead us to the supposition of a greater or less repulsive power, but never to the supposition of a cause of resistance intirely different from such a power. This would be exceedingly unphilosophical. To judge in this manner, is to judge altogether *without*, nay, really *contrary to evidence*. But I come to the *facts* themselves, which no philosopher will pretend to controvert.

When I press my hand against the table, as was mentioned above, I naturally imagine that the obstacle to its going through the table is the *solid matter* of which it consists; but a variety of philosophical considerations demonstrate, that it generally requires a much greater power of pressure than I can exert to bring my fingers into actual contact with the table. Philosophers know that, notwithstanding their seeming contact, they are actually kept at a real distance from each other, by *powers of repulsion* common to them both. Also, electrical appearances shew that a considerable weight is requisite to bring into contact, even links of a chain hanging freely in the air; they being kept asunder by a repulsive power belonging to a very small surface, so that they do not actually touch, though they are supported by each other.

I have myself, as will be seen in the account of my electrical experiments\*, endeavoured to

\* See History of Electricity, p. 702.

ascertain the weight requisite to bring a number of pieces of money, lying upon one another, into seeming contact, or so near to one another only as the particles that compose the same continued piece of metal, and I found it to be very considerable. These, however, are supposed by philosophers not to be in *actual contact*, but to be kept at certain distances from each other by powers of resistance within the substance itself.

Indeed, that the component particles of the hardest bodies do not actually touch one another, is demonstrable from their being brought nearer together by cold, and by their being removed farther from each other by heat. The power, sufficient to overcome these internal forces of repulsion, by which the ultimate particles of bodies are prevented from coming into actual contact, is what no person can pretend to compute. The power, requisite to break their cohesion, or to remove them from the sphere of each other's attractions, may, in some measure, be estimated; but this affords no *data* for ascertaining the force that would be necessary to bring them into actual contact, which may exceed the other almost infinitely.

Mr. Melville has shewn, from optical considerations \*, that a drop of water rolls upon a cabbage leaf without ever coming into actual contact with it; and indeed all the phenomena of *light* are most remarkably un-

\* See History of Discoveries relating to vision, &c. p. 454.  
favourable

favourable to the hypothesis of the solidity or impenetrability of matter.

When light is reflected back from a body on which it seems to strike, it was natural to suppose that this was occasioned by its impinging against the *solid parts* of the body; but it has been demonstrated by Sir Isaac Newton, that the rays of light are always reflected by a *power of repulsion*, acting at some distance from the body. Again, when part of a beam of light has overcome this power of repulsion, and has entered any transparent substance, it goes on in a right line, provided the medium be of an uniform density, without the least interruption, and without a single particle being reflected, till it comes to the opposite side; having met with no solid particles in its way, not even in the densest transparent substances, as glass, crystal, or diamond; and when it is arrived at the opposite side, it is solely affected by the laws of attraction and repulsion. For with a certain angle of incidence, the greatest part, or the whole of it, will be drawn back into the solid body, without going on into the air, where it should seem that there would have been less obstruction to its passage.

Now these facts seem to prove, that such dense bodies as glass, crystal and diamonds, have no solid parts, or so very few, that the particles of light are never found to impinge upon them, or to be obstructed by them. And certainly till some portion of light can be

shewn to be reflected within the substance of a homogeneous transparent body, there can be no reason from *fact*, and *appearances*, to conclude that they have any such solid parts; but, on the contrary, there must be all the reason in the world to believe, that no such solid resisting particles exist. All the phenomena may be explained without them, and indeed cannot be explained with them.

Since then it is demonstrable that no common pressure is sufficient to bring bodies even into *seeming contact*, or that near approach which the component parts of the same body make to each other (though these are by no means in *absolute contact*, as the phenomena of heat and cold fully prove) but the resistance to a nearer approach is in all cases caused by *powers of repulsion*, there can be no sufficient reason to ascribe resistance *in any case* to any thing besides similar *powers*. Nay, the established rules of philosophizing above recited, absolutely require that we ascribe *all resistance* to such *powers*; and consequently the supposition of the *solidity* or *impenetrability* of matter, derived solely from the consideration of the resistance of the solid parts of bodies (which, exclusive of a *power* operating at a distance from them, cannot be proved to have any resistance) appears to be destitute of all support whatever. The hypothesis was suggested by a mere fallacy, and therefore ought to be discarded now that the fallacy is discovered.

It will be said, that if matter be not a solid, or impenetrable substance, *what is it?* I answer, with respect to this, as I should with respect to any other substance, that it is possessed of such properties, and such only, as the actual well-examined *appearances* prove it to be possessed of. That it is possessed of powers of attraction and repulsion, and of several spheres of them, one within another, I know; because appearances cannot be explained without supposing them; but that there is any thing in, or belonging to matter, capable of resistance, besides those powers of repulsion, does not appear from any phenomena that we are yet acquainted with; and, therefore, as a philosopher, I am not authorized to conclude that any such a thing exists. On the contrary, I am obliged to deny that matter has such a property.

If I be asked how, upon this hypothesis, matter differs from spirit, if there be nothing in matter that is properly solid or impenetrable; I answer, that it no way concerns me, or true philosophy, to maintain that there is any such difference between them as has hitherto been supposed. On the contrary, I consider the notion of the union and mutual influences of substances so essentially different from one another, as *material* and *immaterial* substances have been represented, as an opinion attended with difficulties infinitely embarrassing, and indeed actually insuperable,

as may appear in the course of these disquisitions.

The considerations suggested above, tend to remove the *odium* which has hitherto lain upon matter, from its supposed necessary property of *solidity*, *inertness*, or *sluggishness*; as from this circumstance only the *baseness* and *imperfection*, which have been ascribed to it are derived. Since, besides extension, matter has, in fact, no properties but those of *attraction* and *repulsion*, it ought to rise in our esteem, as making a nearer approach to the nature of spiritual and immaterial beings, as we have been taught to call those which are opposed to gross matter.

The principles of the Newtonian philosophy were no sooner known, than it was seen how few, in comparison, of the phenomena of nature, were owing to *solid matter*, and how much to *powers*, which were only supposed to accompany and surround the solid parts of matter. It has been asserted, and the assertion has never been disproved, that for any thing we know to the contrary, all the solid matter in the solar system might be contained within a nut-shell, there is so great a proportion of *void space* within the substance of the most solid bodies. Now, when solidity had apparently so very little to do in the system, it is really a wonder that it did not occur to philosophers sooner, that perhaps there might be nothing for it to do at all, and that there might be no such a thing in nature.

Since

Since the only reason why the principle of thought, or sensation, has been imagined to be incompatible with matter, goes upon the supposition of impenetrability being the essential property of it, and consequently that *solid extent* is the foundation of all the properties that it can possibly sustain, the whole argument for an immaterial thinking principle in man, on this new supposition, falls to the ground; matter, destitute of what has hitherto been called *solidity*, being no more incompatible with sensation and thought, than that substance, which, without knowing any thing farther about it, we have been used to call *immaterial*.

I will add in this place, though it will be considered more fully hereafter, that this supposition, of matter having (besides extension) no other properties but those of attraction and repulsion, greatly relieves the difficulty which attends the supposition of the *creation of it out of nothing*; and also the continual moving of it, by a being who has hitherto been supposed to have no common property with it. For, according to this hypothesis, both the creating mind, and the created substance, are equally destitute of *solidity* or *impenetrability*; so that there can be no difficulty whatever in supposing, that the latter may have been the offspring of the former.

This opinion, which I here maintain, of the *penetrability of matter*, is not my own, but what, from a conviction of its truth, I have

adopted from Father Boscovich, and Mr. Michell, to both of whom, independently of each other, this theory had occurred. Their ideas upon this subject, I have represented in my *History of Discoveries relating to Vision, Light, and Colours*; and as the doctrine is there placed in somewhat of a different light, and in language chiefly borrowed from my authors, I shall, in order to throw greater light on the subject, quote the whole passage relating to it in this place, and with it shall close this section.

“ The easiest method of solving all the difficulties attending the subject of the *subtlety of light*, and of answering Mr. Euler’s objections to its materiality, is to adopt the hypothesis of Mr. Boscovich, who supposes that matter is not *impenetrable*, as before him it had been universally taken for granted; but that it consists of *physical points* only, endued with powers of attraction and repulsion, taking place at different distances, that is, surrounded with various spheres of attraction and repulsion; in the same manner as solid matter is generally supposed to be. Provided, therefore, that any body move with a sufficient degree of velocity, or have sufficient momentum to overcome any powers of repulsion that it may meet with, it will find no difficulty in making its way through any body whatever. For nothing will interfere, or penetrate one another, but *powers*, such as we know

“ know do, in fact, exist in the same place,  
“ and counterbalance or over-rule one an-  
“ other; a circumstance which never had the  
“ appearance of a contradiction, or even of a  
“ difficulty.

“ If the momentum of such a body in mo-  
“ tion be sufficiently great, Mr. Boscovich  
“ demonstrates that the particles of any body,  
“ through which it passes, will not even be  
“ moved out of their place by it. With a  
“ degree of velocity something less than this  
“ they will be considerably agitated, and ig-  
“ nition might perhaps be the consequence,  
“ though the progress of the body in motion  
“ would not be sensibly interrupted; and  
“ with a still less momentum it might not  
“ pass at all\*.”

“ This theory Mr. Boscovich has taken  
“ a great deal of pains to draw out at full  
“ length and illustrate; shewing, that it is by  
“ no means inconsistent with any thing that  
“ we know concerning the laws of mecha-  
“ nics, or our discoveries in natural philoso-  
“ phy, and that a great variety of phenomena,  
“ particularly those which relate to *light*,  
“ admit of a much easier solution upon this  
“ hypothesis than upon any other.

“ The most obvious difficulty, and indeed  
“ the only one that attends this hypothesis,  
“ as it supposes the *mutual penetrability of*  
“ *matter*, arises from the difficulty we meet

\* *Theoria Philosophiæ Naturalis.* p. 167.

“ with

“ with in attempting to force two bodies into  
“ the same place. But it is demonstrable, that  
“ the first obstruction arises from no actual  
“ contact of matter, but from mere powers of  
“ repulsion. This difficulty we can over-  
“ come; and having got within one sphere  
“ of repulsion, we fancy that we are now  
“ impeded by the solid matter itself. But the  
“ very same is the apprehension of the gene-  
“ rality of mankind with respect to the first  
“ obstruction. Why, therefore, may not the  
“ next resistance be only another sphere of  
“ repulsion, which may only require a greater  
“ force than we can apply to overcome it,  
“ without disordering the arrangement of the  
“ constituent particles; but which may be  
“ overcome by a body moving with the  
“ amazing velocity of light.

“ This scheme of the *mutual penetration of*  
“ *matter*, first occurred to Mr. Michell on  
“ reading *Baxter on the Immateriality of the*  
“ *Soul*. He found, that this author's idea of  
“ matter was, that it consisted, as it were,  
“ of bricks cemented together by an imma-  
“ terial mortar. These bricks, if he would  
“ be consistent in his own reasoning, were  
“ again composed of less bricks, cemented  
“ likewise by an immaterial mortar, and so  
“ on *ad infinitum*. This putting Mr. Michell  
“ upon the consideration of the appearances  
“ of nature, he began to perceive that the  
“ bricks were so covered with this immaterial  
“ mortar, that, if they had any existence at  
“ all,

“ all, it could not possibly be *perceived*, every  
“ effect being produced at least in nine in-  
“ stances in ten certainly, and probably in  
“ the tenth also, by this immaterial, spiritual,  
“ and penetrable mortar.

“ Instead, therefore, of placing the world  
“ upon the giant, the giant upon the tortoise,  
“ and the tortoise upon he could not tell  
“ what, he placed the world at once upon  
“ itself; and finding it still necessary, in  
“ order to solve the appearances of nature, to  
“ admit of extended and penetrable imma-  
“ terial substance, if he maintained the im-  
“ penetrability of matter; and observing fur-  
“ ther, that all we perceive by contact, &c.  
“ is this penetrable immaterial substance, and  
“ not the impenetrable one; he began to  
“ think that he might as well admit of *pene-  
“ trable material*, as *penetrable immaterial*  
“ substance; especially, as we know nothing  
“ more of the nature of substance than that  
“ it is something which supports properties;  
“ which properties may be whatever we  
“ please, provided they be not inconsistent  
“ with each other, that is, do not imply the  
“ absence of each other.

“ This by no means seemed to be the case  
“ in supposing two substances to be in the  
“ same place, at the same time, without ex-  
“ cluding each other, the objection to which  
“ is only derived from the resistance we meet  
“ with to the touch, and is a prejudice that  
“ has taken its rise from that circumstance,  
“ and

“ and is not unlike the prejudice against the  
“ antipodes, derived from the constant ex-  
“ perience of bodies falling, as we account it,  
“ downwards.

“ I hope I shall be excused dwelling so  
“ long on this hypothesis, on account both  
“ of the novelty and importance of it, espe-  
“ cially with respect to the phenomena of  
“ light. If I were to make any alteration in  
“ it, it would be to suppose the force of the  
“ sphere of repulsion next to any of the *in-  
divisible points*, which constitute what we  
“ call solid bodies, not to be absolutely *infi-  
nite*, but such as may be overcome by the  
“ momentum of light; which will obviate  
“ the objection of Mr. Melville. If, how-  
“ ever, we consider that Mr. Boscovich  
“ makes this nearest power of repulsion not  
“ to extend to any *real space*, but to be con-  
“ fined to the indivisible point itself, it may  
“ appear to be sufficient for the purpose;  
“ since the chance of such points impinging  
“ upon one another is so little, that it needs  
“ not to be considered at all.”

## SECTION

## SECTION III.

*Various Objections to the preceding Doctrine concerning the Nature of Matter particularly considered.*

I. *Of Bodies acting where they are not.*

IT is objected to the doctrine of these papers, which supposes that the repulsion, ascribed to bodies, takes place at some distance from their real surfaces ; that bodies must then *act where they are not*, which is deemed to be an absurdity. I acknowledge that there is a considerable difficulty in this case ; but it does not in the least affect the hypothesis that I have adopted concerning matter, any more than that which is commonly received. According to Sir Isaac Newton's Observations, rays of light begin to be reflected from all bodies at a certain distance from their surfaces ; and yet he considers those rays as reflected by those bodies, that is, by powers inhering in and properly belonging to those bodies. So also the gravitation of the earth, and of the other planets to the sun, he considers as produced by a power of attraction properly belonging to the sun, which is at an immense distance from them.

If

If Sir Isaac Newton would say that the impulse, by which light is reflected from any body, and by which planets are driven towards the sun, is really occasioned by other *invisible matter* in actual contact with those bodies which are put in motion, I also am equally at liberty to relieve my hypothesis by the same means. But the existence of this invisible substance, to the agency of which that great philosopher ascribes so very much, and which he calls *ether*, has not yet been proved, and is therefore generally supposed not to exist. And, indeed, if it did exist, I do not see how it could produce the effects that are ascribed to it. For the particles of this very ether could not impel any substance, if they were not themselves impelled in the same direction; and must we provide a still more subtle ether for the purpose of impelling the particles of the grosser ether? If so, we must do the same for this other ether, and so on, *ad infinitum*, which is absurd.

Also, if the parts of solid bodies, as, for instance, of gold (which by its expansion when hot, and contraction when cold, appear not actually to touch one another) be kept asunder by a subtle matter, viz. the same ether above-mentioned, the parts of this ether must be kept asunder by a still more subtle ether, as before, and so on, till the whole space, occupied by the dimensions of the piece of gold, be absolutely solid, and have no pores or vacuum whatever,

ever, which would be contrary to appearances, and make it impossible to contract by cold, or by any other means. I do not say that there is no difficulty in this case, but it is not a difficulty that affects my system more than the common one; and therefore it is no particular business of mine to discuss it.

If it be supposed that no kind of matter is concerned in producing the above-mentioned effects at a distance from the surfaces of bodies, but that the Deity himself causes these motions, exerting his influence according to certain laws, am not I at liberty to avail myself of the same assistance? And surely I must have less objection to this resource than those who believe that God is not the only proper agent in the universe. As a necessarian, I, in fact, ascribe every thing to God, and, whether mediately or immediately, makes very little difference. But I believe that it is possible, though we cannot clearly answer every objection to it, that God may endue substances with powers, which, when communicated, produce effects in a manner different from his own immediate agency.

## II. *Whether Matter be any thing, on this Hypothesis.*

It is said that, according to my definition of matter, it must be absolutely *nothing*; because,

cause, besides extension, it consists of nothing but the powers of attraction and repulsion, and because I have sometimes said that it consists of physical points only, possessed of those powers. In this I may have expressed myself rather incautiously; but the *idea* that I meant to convey was evidently this, that, whatever other powers matter may be possessed of, it has not the property that has been called *impenetrability* or *solidity*.

From the manner of expressing our ideas, we cannot speak of powers or properties, but as powers and properties of some *thing* or *substance*, though we know nothing at all of that thing or substance besides the powers that we ascribe to it; and, therefore, when the powers are supposed to be withdrawn, all idea of substance necessarily vanishes with them. I have, therefore, the same right to say that matter is a substance possessed of the properties of attraction and repulsion only, as another has to say, that it is a substance possessed of the property of impenetrability together with them, unless it can be proved that the property of attraction or repulsion necessarily implies, and cannot exist without, that of impenetrability. Whether it be possessed of *any* of these properties must be determined by experiment only. If, upon my idea of matter, every thing vanishes upon taking away the powers of attraction and repulsion, in like manner every idea vanishes from the mind; if, upon the common hypothesis, solidity or impenetrability is a property of matter, then it is a substance possessed of that property.

impenetrability be taken away. I own that I can see no difference in this case; *impenetrability* being as much a property as *penetrability*, and its actual existence equally to be ascertained by experiment, which, in my opinion, is decisive in favour of penetrability.

They who suppose spirit to have proper *extension*, and the Divine Being to have a proper *ubiquity*; must believe the mutual penetrability of real substance; and by whatever names they may choose to call the substances, is of no consequence. If they say that, on my hypothesis, there is no such thing as matter, and that every thing is spirit, I have no objection, provided they make as great a difference in *spirits*, as they have hitherto made in *substances*. The world has been too long amused with mere names.

### III: *Of the Laws of Motion.*

It is said; that if there is not what has been termed a *vis inertiae* in matter, the foundation of the Newtonian Philosophy is overturned: for that the *three laws of motion*, laid down by Sir Isaac Newton, in the beginning of his *Principia*, have no meaning on any other supposition.

I answer, that these laws of motion are founded on certain *facts*, which result just as easily from my hypothesis concerning matter, as from the common one. It is an undoubt-

D ed

ed fact, that every body perseveres in a state of rest or motion, till it be compelled to change that state by some external force, which is the first of the three laws, and the foundation of the other two. But this will follow just as well upon the supposition of that mutual action between two bodies taking place at any given distance from their surfaces. Newton himself shews, that rays of light are reflected by a power belonging to other bodies, without actually impinging upon them, and, consequently, by a power which takes place at a certain distance from their surfaces, without supposing that any of his laws of motion were violated.

#### IV. *Of Powers of Attraction, &c. belonging to physical Points.*

Several of my friends have proposed to me queries concerning the *physical indivisible points*, of which I have sometimes supposed matter to consist. But I beg it may be considered, that the only mention I have made of such *points* is in the extract from my *History of Vision*, &c. in which I gave an account of the hypothesis of Father Boscovich and Mr. Mitchell, adding only a single observation of my own; and that, in what properly belongs to these *Disquisitions*, I have not, as far as I can recollect, encumbered my doctrine with any of the difficulties attending the consideration of

of the *internal structure* of matter; concerning which we know, indeed, very little, having few *data* to argue from.

In this *metaphysical work*, I have confined myself to the exclusion of the property of *impenetrability*, which is generally considered as essential to all matter, and to the claim of the property of *attraction* or *repulsion*, as appearing to me not to be properly what is *imparted* to matter, but what really *makes it to be what it is*, in so much that, without it, it would be nothing at all; which is giving it the same rank and importance that has usually been assigned to the property of *solidity* or *impenetrability*. By this means it is, that I leave no room for the popular objection to the materiality of man, founded on the idea of matter, as *solid* and *inert*, being incapable of the powers of sensation and thought.

This, I say, is all that my purpose in these *Disquisitions* requires; and so far I see no difficulty, that appears to me to be of much moment, and the argument lies in a very small compass. I deny that matter is impenetrable to other matter, because I know no one *fact*, to the explanation of which that supposition is necessary; all those facts which led philosophers to this supposition, later, and more accurate observations, having shewn to be owing to, *something else* than solidity or impenetrability, viz. a *power of repulsion*, which, for that reason, I would substitute in its place. As other philosophers have said “Take

“ away solidity, and matter vanishes;” so, I say, “ Take away attraction and repulsion, “ and matter vanishes.” Also, if any person asks *what it is* that attracts and repels, or what is left when the powers of attraction and repulsion are taken away, I, in my turn, ask, What is it that is solid, or what is left when the property of solidity is taken away. The immaterialist, whether his immaterial substance be extended, or not, cannot, with the least reason, ask such a question as this. If he do, he must be effectually silenced by being asked, what will be left of *spirit*, when the powers of sensation and thought are taken from it. If the immaterial substance he contends for be extended, it must, in that case, be reduced to *mere space*, and if it be not extended, it must be reduced to *nothing at all*. It is, moreover, not a little remarkable, that, according to the common hypothesis, spirit, though destitute of solidity, has the power of acting upon matter, or in other words, has the same property of attraction and repulsion with respect to matter, that I ascribe to unsolid matter; so that it is with a very ill grace indeed, that the abettors of that hypothesis can object to mine, that nothing will remain when the powers of attraction and repulsion are withdrawn.

Farther than this, which I think very clear ground, it does not appear to me that I have any proper call, or business, to proceed. In what *manner* matter, penetrable or impene-  
trable,

trable, is formed, with what interstices, &c. and how far the powers which we ascribe to it may be said to *inhere in*, or *belong to* it, or how far they are the effect of a *foreign power*, viz. that of the deity, concerns not my system in particular. And whatever difficulties may be started as resulting from these considerations, the very same, I think, or greater, may fairly be charged upon the opposite system. If I have advanced beyond these narrow bounds, it has been inadvertently, and for the sake of answering objections. The metaphysician has no business to speculate any farther, and the natural philosopher will find, I imagine, but few *data* for farther speculation.

In fact, what I have advanced above, is all that I have ascribed to that excellent and truly cautious philosopher Mr. Michell. I will venture, however, in order to give all the satisfaction I am able to the inquisitive natural philosopher, to go one step farther in this speculation, on the idea suggested at the conclusion of my account of that hypothesis. I am well aware, that the generality of my readers will revolt at the ideas I am about to present to them; but I beg their patient attention, and I may, perhaps, convince them, that the common hypothesis, when considered in connection with *facts*, is no less revolting.

Suppose then that the Divine Being, when he created *matter*, only fixed certain *centers of*

various attractions and repulsions, extending indefinitely in all directions, the whole effect of them to be upon each other; these centers approaching to, or receding from each other, and consequently carrying their peculiar spheres of attraction and repulsion along with them, according to certain definite circumstances. It cannot be denied that these spheres may be diversified infinitely, so as to correspond to all the kinds of bodies that we are acquainted with, or that are possible. For all effects in which bodies are concerned, and of which we can be sensible by our eyes, touch, &c. may be resolved into attraction or repulsion.

A compages of these centers, placed within the sphere of each others attraction, will constitute a body that we term *compact*; and two of these bodies will, on their approach, meet with a repulsion or resistance, sufficient to prevent one of them from occupying the place of the other, without a much greater force than we are capable of employing, so that to us they will appear perfectly hard.

As in the constitution of all actual bodies that we are acquainted with, these centers are placed so near to each other, that, in every division that we can make, we still leave parts which contain many of these centers, we, reasoning by analogy, suppose that every particle of matter is infinitely divisible; and the space it occupies is certainly so. But, strictly speaking, as these centers which constitute any

any body are not absolutely infinite, it must be naturally possible to come, by division, to one single center, which could not be said to be divisible, or even to occupy any portion of space, though its sphere of action should extend ever so far; and had only *one* such center of attraction, &c. existed, its existence could not have been known, because there would have been nothing on which its action could have been exerted; and there being no *effect*, there could not have been any ground for supposing a *cause*.

Father Boscovich supposes that no two of these centers can ever coincide, the resistance at the point itself being infinite. But admitting their coincidence, they would only from *another center*, with different powers, those belonging to one center modifying those belonging to the other. Had their powers been *the very same* before such coincidence, at the same distances, they would have been just doubled at those distances. Also, though united by one cause, they might possibly be separated by another.

To philosophical people, and I am not now writing for the use of any other, I do not need to explain myself any farther. They will easily see, or F. Boscovich, in his elaborate work will shew them, that this hypothesis will account for all the phenomena of nature.

The principal objection to this hypothesis is, that matter is, by this means, resolved into nothing but the *divine agency*, exerted ac-

cording to certain rules. But as, upon the common hypothesis, it has been again and again admitted, that, notwithstanding the existence of solid matter, every thing is really *done* by the divine power, what material objection can there be to every thing *being* the divine power. There is, at least, this advantage in the scheme, that it supposes *nothing to be made in vain*.

Admitting that bodies consist of solid atoms, there is no sort of connection between the idea of them, and that of *attraction*; so that it is impossible to conceive that any one atom should approach another without a *foreign power*, viz. that of the deity; and therefore bodies consisting of such atoms could not hold together, so as to constitute *compact substances*, without this constant agency.

There is, again, as little connection between the idea of these solid atoms, and that of *repulsion at the least distance from the point of contact*. So that, since the constituent particles of no substance actually touch one another, as is evident from the effects of cold (which brings them nearer together) their coherence cannot be accounted for without the constant agency of the same external power. And though mere *resistance* (not repulsion) *at the place of contact* might be explained on the principle of solidity, it is remarkable, that in no known *case* of resistance can it be proved, that real contact is concerned, and in most cases of resistance it is demon-

demonstrable that there is no real contact ; and therefore there can be no *reason from fact* to believe that there is any such thing as real contact in nature ; so that if there be such a thing as solid matter, it is altogether *superfluous*, being no way concerned in producing any effect whatever.

If I have bewildered myself, and my reader, with this speculation, I can only say that I have been drawn into it, when I would willingly acquiesce in what I have observed concerning the simple *penetrability of matter* ; confessing myself unable to proceed any farther on tolerably sure ground, and my readiness to abandon all this hypothesis, whenever a better, that is, one more nearly corresponding to facts, shall be suggested to me : and I own, that I should much prefer an hypothesis which should make provision for the use of created matter without the necessity of such a *particular agency* as the preceding hypothesis requires ; though, of the two, I shall certainly prefer one which admits nothing being made in vain.

Being, however, engaged thus far, I must be permitted to advance one step farther, for the sake of observing, that there is nothing more approaching to *impiety* in my scheme than in the common one. On this hypothesis every thing is the *divine power* ; but still, strictly speaking, every thing is not the *Deity himself*. The centers of attraction, &c. are fixed by him, and all action is his action ; but

but still these centers are no part of *himself*, any more than the solid matter supposed to be created by him. Nor, indeed, is making the deity to *be*, as well as to *do* every thing, *in this sense*, any thing like the opinion of Spinoza ; because I suppose a source of infinite power, and superior intelligence, from which all inferior beings are derived ; that every inferior intelligent being has a consciousness distinct from that of the supreme intelligence, that they will for ever continue distinct, and that their happiness or misery to endless ages, will depend upon their conduct in this state of probation and discipline.

On the other hand, the common hypothesis is much less favourable to piety, in that it supposes something to be *independent of the divine power*. Exclude the idea of deity on my hypothesis, and every thing except *space*, necessarily vanishes with it, so that the Divine Being, and his energy, are absolutely necessary to that of every other being. His power is the very *life and soul* of every thing that exists ; and, strictly speaking, *without him, we ARE, as well as, can do nothing*. But exclude the idea of Deity on the common hypothesis, and the idea of *solid matter* is no more excluded, than that of *space*. It remains a problem, therefore, whether matter be at all dependent upon God, whether it be *in his power* either to *annihilate*, or to *create* it ; a difficulty that has staggered many, and on which the doctrine of *two original independent prin-*

*principles* was built. My hypothesis, whatever other defects it may have, leaves no foundation for this *system of impiety*; and in this respect it has, I think, a great and desirable advantage.

I own that, for my part, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction in the idea of that most intimate connection which, on my hypothesis, myself, and every thing in which I am concerned, have with the deity. On his will I am intirely dependent for my *being*, and all my *faculties*. My sphere, and degree of influence on other beings, and other things, is *his influence*. I am but an instrument in his hands for effecting a certain part of the greatest and most glorious of purposes. I am happy in *seeing* a little of this purpose, happier in the *belief* that the operations in which I am concerned, are of infinitely greater moment than I am capable of comprehending, and in the persuasion that, in the continuance of my existence, I shall see more and more of this great purpose, and of the relation that myself and my sphere of influence bear to it. Let the abettors of the common hypothesis say more than this if they can, or any thing different from this, that shall give them more satisfaction.

## SECTION IV.

*The proper and direct Proof, that the Seat of the Sentient Principle in Man, is the material Substance of the Brain,*

IN the preceding sections I have endeavoured to rectify the notions which we have been taught to entertain concerning matter, as not being that *impenetrable, inert* substance that we had imagined it to be. This, being admitted, will greatly facilitate our farther progress in these disquisitions; as I hope we shall not consider matter with that contempt and disgust, with which it has generally been treated; there being nothing in its real nature that can justify such sentiments respecting it.

I now proceed to inquire whether, when the nature of matter is rightly understood, there be any reason to think, that there is in man any substance essentially different from it, that is, any thing possessed of other properties besides such as may be superadded to those of *attraction* and *repulsion*, which we have found to belong to matter, or that may be consistent with those properties. For if this be the case, true philosophy, which will not authorize us to *multiply causes*, or kinds of substance, *without necessity*, will forbid us to admit

admit of any such substance. If *one kind of substance* be capable of supporting all the known *properties* of man; that is, if those properties have nothing in them that is absolutely incompatible with one another, we shall be obliged to conclude (unless we openly violate the rules of philosophizing) that no other kind of substance enters into his composition; the supposition being manifestly *unnecessary*, in order to account for any appearance whatever.

All the properties that have hitherto been attributed to matter, may be comprised under those of *attraction* and *repulsion* (all the effects of which have been shewn to be produced by *powers*, independent of all *solidity*) and of *extension*, by means of which matter occupies a certain portion of space. Besides these properties, man is possessed of the powers of *sensation* or *perception*, and *thought*. But if, without giving the reins to our imaginations, we suffer ourselves to be guided in our inquiries by the simple rules of philosophizing above-mentioned, we must necessarily conclude, as it appears to me, that these powers also may belong to the same substance, that has also the properties of attraction, repulsion, and extension, which I, as well as others, call by the name of *matter*; though I have been obliged to divest it of one property which has hitherto been thought essential to it, as well as to give it others, which have not been thought essential to it; and consequently my

my idea of this substance is not, in all respects, the same with that of other metaphysicians.

The reason of the conclusion above-mentioned, is simply this, that the powers of sensation or perception, and thought, as belonging to man, have never been found but in conjunction with a certain *organized system of matter*; and therefore, that those powers necessarily exist in, and depend upon, such a system. This, at least, must be our conclusion, till it can be shewn that these powers are incompatible with other known properties of the same substance; and for this I see no sort of pretence.

It is true, that we have a very imperfect idea of what the *power of perception* is, and it may be as naturally impossible that we should have a clear idea of it, as that the eye should see itself. But this very ignorance ought to make us cautious in asserting with what other properties it may, or may not, exist. Nothing but a precise and definite knowledge of the nature of perception and thought can authorize any person to affirm, whether they may not belong to an extended substance, which has also the properties of attraction and repulsion. Seeing, therefore, no sort of reason to imagine, that these different properties are really *inconsistent*, any more than the different properties of *resistance* and *extension*, I am, of course, under the necessity of being guided by the *phenomena* in my conclusions

sions concerning the proper seat of the powers of perception and thought. These phenomena I shall now briefly represent.

Had we formed a judgment concerning the necessary seat of thought, by the *circumstances that universally accompany it*, which is our rule in all other cases, we could not but have concluded, that in man it is a property of the *nervous system*, or rather of the *brain*. Because, as far as we can judge, the faculty of thinking, and a certain state of the brain, always accompany and correspond to one another; which is the very reason why we believe that any property is inherent in any substance whatever. There is no instance of any man retaining the faculty of thinking, when his brain was destroyed; and whenever that faculty is impeded, or injured, there is sufficient reason to believe that the brain is disordered in proportion; and therefore we are necessarily led to consider the latter as the seat of the former.

Moreover, as the faculty of thinking in general ripens, and comes to maturity with the body, it is also observed to decay with it; and if, in some cases, the mental faculties continue vigorous when the body in general is enfeebled, it is evidently because, in those particular cases, the *brain* is not much affected by the general cause of weakness. But, on the other hand, if the brain alone be affected, as by a blow on the head, by actual pressure within the skull, by sleep, or by inflammation,

tion, the mental faculties are universally affected in proportion.

Likewise, as the mind is affected in consequence of the affections of the body and brain, so the body is liable to be reciprocally affected by the affections of the mind, as is evident in the visible effects of all strong passions, hope or fear, love or anger, joy or sorrow, exultation or despair. These are certainly irrefragable arguments, that it is properly no other than *one and the same thing* that is subject to these affections, and that they are necessarily dependent upon one another. In fact, there is just the same reason to conclude, that the powers of sensation and thought are the necessary result of a particular organization, as that sound is the necessary result of a particular concussion of the air. For in both cases equally the one constantly accompanies the other, and there is not in nature a stronger argument for a necessary connection of any cause and any effect.

To adopt an opinion different from this, is to form an hypothesis without a single fact to support it. And to conclude, as some have done, that a material system is so far from being a necessary pre-requisite to the faculty of thinking, that it is an obstruction to it, is to adopt a method of argumentation the very reverse of every thing that has hitherto been followed in philosophy. It is to conclude, not only *without*, but directly *contrary* to all appearances whatsoever.

That

That the perfection of thinking should depend on the sound state of the body and brain *in this life*, insomuch that a man has no power of thinking without it, and yet that he should be capable of thinking better when the body and brain are destroyed, seems to be the most unphilosophical and absurd of all conclusions. If death be an advantage with respect to thinking, *disease* ought to be a proportional advantage likewise ; and universally, the nearer the body approaches to a state of dissolution, the freer and less embarrassed might the faculties of the mind be expected to be found. But this is the very reverse of what really happens.

Part of this argument is so well represented, and so forcibly urged, by the excellent Mr. Hallet, that I shall quote the entire passage from the first volume of his *Discourses*, p. 213.

“ I see a man move, and hear him speak  
“ for some years. From his speech I cer-  
“ tainly infer that he *thinks*, as I do. I see  
“ then that man is a being who thinks and  
“ acts. After some time the man falls down  
“ in my sight, grows cold and stiff. He  
“ speaks and acts no more. Is it not then  
“ natural to conclude, that he *thinks* no more ?  
“ As the only reason I had to believe that he  
“ did think, was his motion and speech, so  
“ now that this motion and speech cease, I  
“ have lost the only way of proving that he  
“ had a power of thought.

“ Upon this sudden death, the one visible  
“ thing, the one man is greatly charg'd.  
“ Whence could I infer that the same *he*  
“ consists of two parts, and that the inward  
“ part continues to live and think, and flies  
“ away from the body, when the outward  
“ part ceases to live and move. It looks as if  
“ the *whole man* was gone, and that all his  
“ powers cease at the same time. His mo-  
“ tion and thought die together, as far as I  
“ can discern.

“ The powers of *thought*, *speech*, and *mo-  
tion* equally depend upon the body, and  
“ run the same fate in case of mens' declining  
“ in old age. When a man dies through  
“ old age, I perceive his powers of speech,  
“ motion, and thought, decay and die to-  
“ gether, and by the same degrees. The  
“ moment he ceases to move, and breathe, he  
“ appears to cease to *think* too.

“ When I am left to mere reason, it seems  
“ to me that my power of *thought* as much  
“ depends upon my body, as my power of  
“ *sight* or *hearing*. I could not think in in-  
“ fancy. My powers of thought, of sight,  
“ and of feeling, are equally liable to be ob-  
“ structed by the body. A blow on the head  
“ has deprived a man of thought, who could  
“ yet see and feel and move; so that na-  
“ turally the power of thinking seems as  
“ much to belong to the body as any power  
“ of man whatsoever. Naturally there ap-  
“ pears no more reason to suppose that a  
“ man

“ man can think out of the body, than he  
“ can hear sounds, or feel cold, out of the  
“ body.”

Notwithstanding, Mr. Hallet was satisfied, that there was no good argument from the light of *nature*, in favour either of the immateriality or immortality of the soul, he still retained the belief of it on the authority, as he imagined, of *revelation*. But it will be seen, in a subsequent section, that the scriptures afford no evidence whatever of a thing so contrary to the principles of reason; but that the sacred writers go upon quite different principles, always taking for granted the very thing I am here contending for; and that the notion of the soul being a substance distinct from the body, was originally a part of the system of *heathenism*, and was from thence introduced into christianity, which has derived the greatest part of its corruptions from this source.

It is still more unaccountable in Mr. Locke, to suppose, as he did, and as he largely contends, that, for any thing that we know to the contrary, the faculty of thinking may be a property of the body, and yet to think it more probable that this faculty inhered in a different substance, viz. an immaterial soul. A philosopher ought to have been apprized, that we are to suppose no more *causes* than are necessary to produce the *effects*; and therefore, that we ought to conclude, that the whole man is material, unless it should appear, that

he has some powers or properties that are absolutely incompatible with matter.

Since then, Mr. Locke did not apprehend, that there was any real inconsistency between the known properties of body, and those that have generally been referred to mind, he ought, as became a philosopher, to have concluded, that the *whole substance of man*, that which supports all his powers and properties, was one uniform substance, and by no means that he consisted of *two substances*, and those so very different from one another as *body* and *spirit* are usually represented to be; so much so, that they have been generally thought incapable of having any common property. Accordingly, the best writers upon this subject, always consider the union of these two very different substances as a most stupendous and wonderful thing. “*Le tout pouissant*,” says the author of *La vraye Philosophie*, “*pouvoit seul etablir un accord si intime entre deux substances si discordantes par leur nature.*”

SECTION

## SECTION V.

*Additional Considerations in Favour of the Materiality of the Human Soul.*

IN the preceding section, I have represented how unphilosophical it is to conclude, that all the powers of man do not belong to *the same substance*, when they are observed to have a constant and necessary dependance upon one another, and when there is not, as far as we know, the least inconsistency or incompatibility between them. If there be any foundation for the established rules of philosophizing, the argument ought to be conclusive with us, and every thing that can be added to it is really superfluous. However, for the greater satisfaction of some of my readers, I shall, in this section, subjoin some additional arguments, or considerations, or rather, in some cases, distinct illustrations of the preceding argument.

1. That the faculty of thinking necessarily depends, for its *exercise*, at least, upon a stock of ideas, about which it is always conversant, will hardly be questioned by any person. But there is not a single idea of which the mind is possessed, but what may be proved to have come to it from the bodily senses, or to have been consequent upon the perceptions of sense. Could we, for instance, have had any idea of

colour, as *red*, *blue*, &c. without the eyes, and optic nerves; of *sound*, without the ears, and auditory nerves; of *smell*, without the nostrils, and the olfactory nerves, &c. &c.? It is even impossible to conceive how the mind could have become possessed of any of its present stock of ideas, without just such a body as we have; and consequently, judging from present appearances (and we have no other means of forming any judgment at all) without a body, of some kind or other, we could have had no ideas at all, any more than a man without eyes could have any particular ideas belonging to colours. The notion, therefore, of the *possibility* of thinking in man, without an organized body, is not only destitute of all evidence from actual appearances, but is directly contrary to them; and yet these appearances ought alone to guide the judgment of philosophers.

Dr. Clark seems to have imagined, that he had fully answered the argument for the materiality of the human soul, from its having received all its ideas from the bodily senses, by asking whether there might not possibly have been *other inlets to ideas* besides our present senses. "If these," says he\*, "be arbitrary, then the want of these does by no means infer a total want of perception, but the same soul may, in another state, have different ways of perception."

\* Demonstration, &c. p. 89.

To this it is easy to reply, that mere *possibility* is no foundation for any conclusion in this case. We see, in fact, that all our sensations come to us by the way of the corporeal senses ; and though our observing this will authorize us to say, that, if the Divine Being had so pleased, we might have had *more*, or *fewer*, or quite *different* senses, and, of course, should have had very different sets of sensations and ideas, it will by no means authorize us to say, that it was even *possible* for us to have had sensations and ideas *without any corporeal senses* at all. We have no *example* of any such thing, and therefore cannot say that it is even *possible*, much less that it is *actually* the case. Present appearances certainly lead us to think, that our mental powers *necessarily* depend upon our corporeal ones ; and till some very different appearances present themselves, it must be exceedingly unphilosophical to imagine that the connection is not necessary.

2. The only reason why it has been so earnestly contended for, that there is some principle in man that is not material, is that it might subsist, and be capable of sensation and action, when the body was dead. But, if the mind was naturally so independent of the body, as to be capable of subsisting by itself, and even of appearing to more advantage after the death of the body, it might be expected to discover some signs of its independence before death, and especially when

the organs of the body were obstructed, so as to leave the soul more at liberty to exert itself, as in a state of *sleep*, or *swooning*, which most resemble the state of death, in which it is pretended that the soul is most of all alive, most active, and vigorous.

But, judging by appearances, the reverse of all this is the case. That a man does not think during sleep, except in that imperfect manner which we call *dreaming*, and which is nothing more than an approach to a state of vigilance, I shall not here dispute, but take for granted; referring my readers to Mr. Locke, and other writers upon that subject; and that all power of thinking is suspended during a swoon, I conclude with certainty, because no appearance whatever can possibly lead us to suspect the contrary.

3. If the mental principle was, in its own nature, immaterial, and immortal, all its particular *faculties* would be so too; whereas, we see that every faculty of the mind, without exception, is liable to be impaired, and even to become wholly extinct before death. Since, therefore, all the faculties of the mind, separately taken, appear to be mortal, the substance, or principle, in which they exist, must be pronounced to be mortal too. Thus, we might conclude, that the *body* was mortal, from observing that all the separate *senses*, and *limbs*, were liable to decay and perish.

4. If the sentient principle in man be immaterial, it can have no *extension*, it can neither

ther have length, breadth, nor thickness, and consequently every thing within it, or properly belonging to it, must be *simple* and *indivisible*. Besides, it is universally acknowledged, that if the substance of the soul was not simple and indivisible, it would be liable to corruption, and death; and, therefore, that no advantage would be gained by supposing the power of thinking to belong to any substance distinct from the body. Let us now consider how this notion agrees with the phenomena of sensation and ideas, which are the proper subject of thought.

It will not be denied, but that sensations, or ideas, properly exist *in the soul*, because it could not otherwise retain them, so as to continue to perceive and think after its separation from the body. Now, whatever ideas are in themselves, they are evidently produced by external objects, and must therefore correspond to them; and since many of the objects, or archetypes of ideas are divisible, it necessarily follows, that the ideas themselves are divisible also. The idea of a *man*, for instance, could in no sense correspond to a *man*, which is the archetype of it, and therefore could not be the idea of a *man*, if it did not consist of the ideas of his *head, arms, trunk, legs, &c.* It, therefore, consists of *parts*, and consequently is *divisible*. And how is it possible that a thing (be the *nature* of it what it may) that is *divisible*, should be contained in a substance, be the *nature*

DISQUISITIONS ON  
ture of *it* likewise what it may, that is *in-  
divisible*?

If the archetypes of ideas have extension, the ideas which are expressive of them, and are actually produced by them, according to certain mechanical laws, must have extension likewise; and therefore the mind in which they exist, whether it be material or immaterial, must have extension also. But how any thing can have extension, and yet be immaterial, without coinciding with our idea of mere empty *space*, I know not. I am therefore obliged to conclude, that the sentient principle in man, containing ideas which certainly have parts, and are divisible, and consequently must have extension, cannot be that simple, indivisible, and immaterial substance that some have imagined it to be; but something that has real *extension*, and therefore may have the other properties of matter.

To this argument for the extension and materiality of the human soul, the author of *La vraye Philosophie* replies, in a manner very singular, and to me not very intelligible. He says, p. 104, "the impression of a circle, or "any object that is divisible, strikes the or- "gan of sense; this action is transmitten- "by some unknown law to the soul, which "is thereby modified, and which refers its "own modifications, indivisible as *itself* is, "to external objects. Thus, the idea of a "circle is not round, nor has any extension, "though

“ though it answers perfectly to a circle that  
 “ is divisible, and has extension.” This doc-  
 trine he illustrates by what is observed of  
 those who *dream*, and *walk in their sleep*, ima-  
 gining they see what is not before them, and  
 also by optical deceptions. “ This,” says he,  
 “ is the case with all *colour*, which is falsely  
 “ thought to be in bodies; but though the  
 “ coloured body moves, its colour is as im-  
 “ moveable as the soul that perceives it\*.”  
 What he farther adds upon this subject is  
 still more unintelligible to me. “ The sen-  
 “ sations, simple and indivisible as they are,  
 “ contain, in an eminent manner, the quality  
 “ of extension, and thereby prove, that the  
 “ substance which they modify, viz. the soul,  
 “ is of an order superior to matter†.”

5. All the defenders of the *simple, indivisible*,  
 and *unalterable* nature of the soul, that I have  
 met with, appear to me to have overlooked a  
 great variety of mental *affections*, which ne-  
 cessarily imply alteration, especially *meliora-  
 tion* and *depravation*, which is something so  
 similar to *corruption*, that it has universally  
 obtained the same name, and which is cer-  
 tainly incompatible with natural and perfect  
*simplicity*. From Mr. Baxter’s own acknow-  
 ledgment, expressed in words which it is im-  
 possible to misconstrue, it necessarily follows,  
 that, whatever may happen to the soul, during  
 its temporary connection with the body, it

\* P. 108.    † P. 113.

must, whenever it is set at liberty from it, immediately recover its pristine purity. But what then becomes of the christian doctrine, upon his own hypothesis, of vicious habits (which are the proper *disease* of the mind) inhering in the soul after death, and its being liable to punishment, in a separate unembodied state, on that account?

Mr. Baxter, however, says\*, “ the soul “ cannot have a disorder lodged in itself, nor “ be subject to any disease. A man who “ considers the *simple nature* of it will never “ affirm this.—The soul can admit of no “ disease from matter, as having no *parts* to “ be disordered. It can suffer no alteration “ in its own substance, if that substance be “ not annihilated.—We would have the soul “ to grow up, to decay, to sleep, to be mad, “ to be drunk. Who does not see all these “ are ridiculous fancies, too gross to be en- “ tertained concerning a simple uncompound- “ ed substance? If the soul were mad, or had “ the disease lodged in itself, what could cure “ it ?”

If this reasoning have any foundation, it will follow, that nothing is requisite to discharge all the vices of the soul, but to detach it from its fatal connection with the body, and leave it to itself. All vice and disorder, as it came with the body, and always inhered in it, must terminate and depart with it.

\* Vol. ii. p. 161.

## SECTION VI.

*Advantages attending the System of MATERIALISM, especially with respect to the Doctrines of REVEALED RELIGION.*

IT is a great advantage attending the system of materialism, that we hereby get rid of a great number of *difficulties*, which exceedingly clog and embarrass the opposite system; such, for instance, as these, *What becomes of the soul during sleep, in a swoon, when the body is seemingly dead (as by drowning, or other accidents) and especially after death; also, what was the condition of it before it became united to the body, and at what time did that union take place? &c. &c. &c.*

If the soul be immaterial, and the body material, neither the generation nor the destruction of the body can have any effect with respect to it. This *foreign principle* must have been united to it either at the time of conception, or at birth, and must either have been created at the time of such union, or have existed in a separate state prior to that period. Now all these suppositions are clogged with great difficulties, and indeed can hardly be considered at all, without being immediately rejected, as extremely improbable, if not absurd.

Must

Must the divine power be necessarily employed to produce a soul, whenever the human species copulate? Or must some of the pre-existent spirits be obliged, immediately upon that event, to descend from the superior regions, to inhabit the new-formed embryo? If this be the case (which was the original hypothesis of the separability of the soul from the body) by what *rule* must this descent be regulated? Must these unembodied spirits become embodied in *rotation* according to some rank, and *condition*, or must it be determined by *lot*, &c.?

If *man* be actuated by a principle distinct from his body, every *brute animal* must have an immaterial soul also; for they differ from us in *degree* only, and not at all in *kind*; having all the same mental, as well as corporeal powers and faculties that we have, though not in the same extent; and they are possessed of them in a greater degree than those of our race that are *ideots*, or that die *infants*.

Now the state of the souls of brutes is perhaps more embarrassing than that of human beings. Are *they* originally, and naturally, the same beings with the souls of men? Have they pre-existed, and are they to continue for ever? If so, *how* and *where* are they to be disposed of after death; and are they also to be re-united to their present bodies, as well as the souls of men? These are only a few of

the

the difficulties which must necessarily occur to any thinking person, who adopts the opinion of the essential difference between soul and body.

Some hypothesis or other, every person, who maintains the immaterial system, and reflects upon it all, must necessarily have, in order to solve these questions, and many others of a similar nature. For every general system must be consistent, and also have all its parts properly filled up. The questions that I have mentioned must perpetually obtrude themselves upon those persons whose system admits of their being asked, as indeed is evident from the formal discussion of most of them by systematical writers; and whether any person be able to satisfy himself with respect to them or not, he cannot be without some hypothesis or other for that purpose. Now I will venture to pronounce, without discussing the questions above-mentioned particularly, that there is no method of solving them that can give any tolerable satisfaction to an ingenuous mind.

Metaphysicians, who have conceived high notions of the dignity of *immaterial substances*, and who have entertained a great contempt for every thing *mortal*, are much embarrassed when they consider the *use of the body*. The ancients, indeed, who imagined all souls to have pre-existed, and to have been sent into the bodies in which they are now confined as a *punishment*, for offences committed

mitted in their pre-existent state, found no difficulty in this case. The body is necessarily a *clog*, and an *impediment* to the soul, and it was provided for that very purpose. But the moderns, who have dropped the notion of pre-existence, and of offences committed prior to birth, and yet retain from that system the intire doctrine of the *contagion of matter*, which is a language that, among others, Mr. Baxter makes use of \*, must necessarily be exceedingly embarrassed, when they connect with this mutilated *heathenish system* the peculiar doctrines of *christianity*.

Indeed, what is advanced by the most acute of these christian metaphysicians upon this subject is little short of a contradiction in terms. Mr. Baxter, for instance, says †, that “ nothing could be fitter than matter to initiate beings, whose first information of things is from sense, and to train them up in the elements of knowledge and admiration.” Let us now see what consistency there is between this notion of the use of matter, with what he had said before ‡, of the absolute *unfitness* of matter for this purpose of training up the soul in the elements of knowledge.

“ We know not,” says he, “ nor can we name a greater absurdity, than that union to a dead and torpid substance should give the soul life and power, or any degree of them ; or that separation should again de-

\* See *Matho*, vol. ii. p. 212.

† *Matho*, vol. ii. p. 211.  
‡ P. 173.

“ prive

“ prive it of these. The soul, therefore,  
“ must be percipient and active in its own  
“ nature, independent of matter.” Again he  
says, “ matter, when best disposed, must limit  
“ the power and activity of the soul, and  
“ when disordered and indisposed, may quite  
“ obstruct or impede its operations, but can  
“ in no manner aid or assist its powers and  
“ energy, otherwise than by confining and  
“ determining them to one manner of exer-  
“ tion. Hence the soul, when separate from  
“ matter, must be freed from indisposition,  
“ and the confinement be taken off from its  
“ natural activity.”

The manifest contradiction between these two accounts of matter, hardly needs to be pointed out. The immaterial principle, it seems, is to be *initiated in the elements of knowledge* by its union to a dead and torpid substance, which is so far from giving it any life or power, or any degree of them, that we cannot name a greater absurdity, than such a supposition; a substance which, *when best disposed*, must limit the powers and activity of the soul, and when *disordered and indisposed*, as it is evidently very liable to be, and indeed is hardly ever otherwise, may quite *obstruct* and *impede* all its operations; and can in no manner aid or assist its powers or energy.

If the soul, as this ingenious writer says, be *percipient and active in its own nature*, and when separate from the body must be freed from indisposition, and have a confinement

taken off from its natural activity, it would certainly have been very happy for it never to have been subject to such a *confinement*, and a great advantage never to have been affected by such a *contagion*.

The only shadow of consistency that is preserved in this account, is hinted at where he says, that “ matter can no otherwise aid and “ assist the powers of the soul, than by con- “ fining and determining them to one man- “ ner of exertion.” This, however, is but a shadow of consistency, for, by the very same way of reasoning, it might be proved, that a man is a gainer by the loss of his eyes or ears, and indeed of all his senses except one; because his sentient powers being, by this means, *confined and determined to one manner of exertion*, he becomes more perfect in the exercise of it; whereas he is certainly a loser upon the whole, by having his senses and faculties thus curtailed. But allowing that some small advantage might possibly accrue to the soul from this great limitation of its percipient and active powers, what chance is there for its receiving any benefit upon the whole; when the thing that is employed to confine it is sure to become, if we judge from fact and experience, exceedingly disordered? so that, by this writer’s own confession, it must quite obstruct and impede all its operations; and when, by its union to this contagious principle, it is liable to be contaminated in such a manner as to be utterly ruined and lost to every

every valuable end of existence. Great, indeed, we see, is the risk that the immaterial soul runs by its union with this gross material body; and small, very small indeed, is the advantage that it may happen to derive from it.

It seems, however, that when the christian, after having long struggled, and maintained a very unequal combat in its present state of confinement, in which his soul can have little or no use of its native powers and faculties, has, by the benevolent constitution of nature, at length got rid of this *incumbrance of clay*, these *fetters of matter*, and this dreadful *contagion of flesh and blood*, and with all the privileges, and all the powers of action and enjoyment, naturally belonging to an *unembodied spirit*, has ranged the regions of *empyreum* for some thousands of years, these powers are to be again clogged and impeded by a *second union to matter*, though better tempered than before, and therefore a less, though a real and necessary incumbrance. And what is most extraordinary in the case is, that this *second degradation* takes place at a period which christianity points out to us as the great jubilee of the virtuous and the good; when (all mankind being judged according to their works) they shall receive the plaudit of their judge, and shall enter upon the *inheritance of a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world*; at which time, and not before, they are to be admitted to be for ever with the *Lord Jesus Christ*.

Mr. Baxter, in his *Essay on the Soul*\*, says, that “ after the resurrection, the re-union of souls to their bodies may be no punishment, or diminution of the happiness designed them, if we conceive it to be within the reach of infinite power to bring this union to a state of *indolence*, or *inoffensiveness* on the part of matter. For to have no trouble or uneasiness at all from matter, is precisely the state of happiness with respect to it, that spirits have which are intirely free from it. But no attentive man,” he adds, “ ever thought that there consisted any real felicity in being united to material substance.”

That this account of the effects of the union of the mind with matter is inconsistent with the other quoted from his *Matho*, needs no pointing out. In the one case, matter must *necessarily limit and fetter the soul*, whereas in the other, it is possible, though barely possible, that it may *not fetter it*. Upon the most favourable supposition, however, the christian resurrection is barely *no disadvantage*. But can this be that state towards which all christians are taught to look with the most eager expectation, when only their joy is to *commence*, and to *be full*. Looking, as the apostle Peter says, for that *blessed hope*. One would think that such writers as these had been but little conversant with the New Testament, to the

\* P. 304.

uniform language of which their notions are totally repugnant.

Such have been the preposterous effects of mixing these *heathenish notions* with the principles of our holy religion, which disclaims all connection with them, and militates against them in every article,

On the other hand, the system of materialism, which revelation uniformly supposes, is clogged with none of these difficulties, or rather absurdities. Man, according to this system, is no more than what we now see of him. His being commences at the time of his conception, or perhaps at an earlier period. The corporeal and mental faculties, inhering in the same substance, grow, ripen, and decay together; and whenever the system is dissolved, it continues in a state of dissolution, till it shall please that Almighty Being who called it into existence to restore it to life again.

By the help of the system of materialism, also, the christian removes the very foundation of many doctrines, which have exceedingly debased and corrupted christianity; being in fact a heterogeneous mixture of *pagan notions*, diametrically opposite to those on which the whole *system of revelation* is built. The christian system provides no reward for the righteous till the general *resurrection of the just*, nor any punishment for the wicked, till the *end of the world*, at which

time, and not before, the angels will be commissioned to gather out of the kingdom of Christ every thing that offends. Then only will be the great harvest, when the wheat (to use the language of our Saviour) will be gathered into the garner, and the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire.

The immaterial system, on the contrary, makes it necessary to provide some receptacle for the souls of the dead, which being in a state of consciousness, must necessarily be in a state of pleasure or pain, reward or punishment, even antecedent to the day of judgment. Now as there is no hint concerning the nature, or use of such an intermediate state in the scriptures, the vain imaginations of men have had most ample scope for displaying themselves; and among other gainful absurdities, the priests have taken this advantage to found upon it the doctrines of purgatory, and the worship of the dead.

The doctrine of *pre-existence*, or that of all human souls having been lapsed angels, which was the true source of *Gnosticism*, and most of the early corruptions of christianity, could have no other foundation than the notion of there being something in man quite different from his corporeal organized system; which, therefore, might have existed prior to that system, as well as continue after its dissolution. It was at this time, when *all* souls were supposed to have pre-existed, that the soul

soul of Christ was not only supposed to have pre-existed, together with the souls of other persons, but, suitable to his rank here, had a proportional superior rank and office assigned to him before he came into the world. Upon this foundation he was first considered as the *δημιουργος* of the Oriental philosophy, or the immediate maker of the world under the supreme Being; then as a peculiar *emanation of the divine essence*; and lastly, as having been from eternity *equal to God himself*. From this it is evident, that the very seeds of this dreadful corruption of christianity, which has been the fruitful source of many others, could not have been sown, but in this immaterial, and as it may properly be termed, this heathenish system.

Had the minds of the primitive christians continued uncontaminated with *the wisdom of this world*, and considered Christ as his apostles, who lived and conversed with him, evidently appear to have considered him, viz. as a *mere man approved of God, by signs and wonders which God did by him*, they would have entertained for him all the sentiments of love and reverence that were due to the *captain of their salvation*, and the *first begotten from the dead*; who, as their *elder brother*, was *gone to prepare a place for them*, in the heavenly mansions, and who would return with a commission from God to raise the dead, and judge the world; but they could never have arrogated for him *divine honours*, and conse-

quently the worship that has been paid to the Virgin Mary, and other popish saints, would not have followed: and the influence of these leading opinions, upon the whole mass of corruptions that came in like a deluge afterwards, is easily traced.

## SECTION VII.

*Considerations more immediately relating to IMMATERIAL SUBSTANCES, and especially to the CONNEXION OF THE SOUL AND BODY.*

## PART I.

*Of the PRESENCE of the Soul with the Body.*

THE idea of an *immaterial substance*, as it is defined by metaphysicians, is intirely a modern thing, and is still unknown to the vulgar. The original, and still prevailing idea concerning a *soul* or *spirit*, is that of a kind of attenuated aerial substance, of a more subtle nature than gross bodies, which have weight, and make a sensible resistance when they are pushed against, or struck at. The *form* of it may be variable, but it is capable, in certain circumstances, of becoming the object

ject of sight. Thus when our Lord appeared to his disciples walking on the sea, and also after his resurrection, they thought it had been a *spirit*; and, therefore, to convince them of their mistake on the latter of these occasions, he bade them handle him; for that a spirit had not flesh and bones, as they might be convinced that he had. He did not observe to them, that a spirit could not be the object of *sight*, any more than of *touch*. Also, whatever expressions might casually drop from any of the ancient philosophers, it is evident to all who consider the whole of their doctrine, that their idea of a spirit was widely different from that which is now contended for.

That a spirit is, strictly speaking, *indivisible*, which is essential to the modern idea of it, is absolutely incompatible with the notion that is known to have run through almost all the systems of the ancients, derived originally from the *East*, viz. that all human souls, and all finite intelligences, were originally *portions of the great soul of the universe*; and though detached from it for a time, are finally to be absorbed into it again; when the separate consciousness belonging at present to each of them will be for ever lost. How the idea of a spirit came to be refined into the very *attenuated state* in which we now find it, I shall endeavour to investigate in its proper place; and, in the mean time, shall bestow a few observations upon it, as it appears in the writings

ings of the latest, and most celebrated metaphysicians.

A spirit, then, or an *immaterial substance*, in the modern strict use of the term, signifies a substance that has no *extension* of any kind, nor any thing of the *vis inertiae* that belongs to matter. It has neither *length*, *breadth*, nor *thickness*; so that it occupies no portion of space; on which account, the most rigorous metaphysicians say, that it bears no sort of relation to space, any more than sound does to the eye, or light to the ear. In fact, therefore, *spirit* and *space* have nothing to do with one another, and it is even improper to say, that an immaterial being *exists in space*, or that it *resides* in one place more than in another; for, properly speaking, it is *no where*, but has a mode of existence that cannot be expressed by any phraseology appropriated to the modes in which matter exists. Even these spiritual and intellectual beings themselves have no idea of the manner in which they exist, at least while they are confined by gross matter.

It follows also from this view of the subject, that the *divine mind* can only be said to be *omnipresent* by way of figure; for, strictly speaking, this term implies *extension*, of which all immaterial substances are utterly incapable. By the *omnipresence* of the Deity, therefore, they mean his power of *acting every where*, though he *exists no where*. The mind

mind of any particular person, also, they suppose not to be confined within the body of that person; but that though itself bears no relation whatever to space or place, its exertions and affections are, by the sovereign appointment of his Creator, confined to a particular system of organized matter, wherever that happens to be, and continues so limited in its operations as long as the organization subsists; but, that being dissolved, the immaterial principle has no more to do with the matter that had been thus organized, than with any other matter in the universe. It can neither affect it, nor be affected by it.

Others, however, I believe, considering that, though *mathematical points* occupy no real portion of space, they are yet capable of bearing some relation to it, by being fixed in this or that place, at certain distances from each other, are willing to allow that spirits also may be said to be in one place in preference to another; and consequently, that they are capable of changing place, and of moving hither and thither, together with the body to which they belong. But this is not the opinion that seems to prevail in general; since it supposes spirit to have, at least, one property in common with matter, whereas a being strictly *immortal* (which, in terms, implies a negation of all the properties of matter) ought not to have any thing in common with it.

Besides

Besides, a mathematical point is, in fact, no *substance* at all, being the mere *limit*, or termination of a body, or the *place* in void space where a body is terminated, or may be supposed to be so. Mere *points*, mere *lines*, or mere *surfaces* are alike the mere *boundaries of material substances*, and may not improperly be called their *properties*, necessarily entering into the definition of particular bodies, and consequently bear no sort of relation to what is immaterial. And therefore, the *consistent immaterialist* has justly disclaimed this idea.

Indeed, it is evident, that if nothing but immaterial substances, or pure intelligences, had existed, the very idea of *place*, or *space*, could not have occurred to us. And an idea, that an immaterial being could never have acquired without having an idea of body, or matter, cannot belong to *itself*, but to matter only. Consequently, according to the strict and only consistent system of immateriality, a spirit is properly *no where*, and altogether incapable of *local motion*, though it has an arbitrary connection with a body, that is confined to a particular place, and is capable of moving from one place to another. This, therefore, being the only consistent notion of an immaterial substance, and every thing short of it being mere materialism, it is to the consideration of this idea, that I shall here confine myself.

Appearances cannot be said to favour the doctrine of these very abstract metaphysicians,

For,

For, certainly, judging by what appears to us, we should naturally say that the soul *accompanies the body*, and is contained in it, and therefore changes place together with the body. On this account, therefore, the most acute immaterialists have taken a good deal of pains to shew that, notwithstanding these appearances, which at first sight are acknowledged to be unfavourable to their system, there is not properly any motion, or change of place, in the soul, let the body to which it belongs rove about ever so much.

“ For my part,” says Father Gerdil, as he is quoted by the author of *La vraye Philosophie* \*, “ if I had no other reason to satisfy me, I should content myself with saying, with the most celebrated philosophers, “ of ancient and modern schools, that one “ cannot doubt but that *thought* and *volition* “ are incapable of moving with the body, be-“ cause they are evidently without extension. “ But the *soul*, of which they are modifi-“ cations, is of the same nature with them. “ The *soul*, therefore, can no more move “ than the *thought* or the *will*.”

To illustrate this paradox, he says †, that “ the *void space*, in a carriage drawn by “ horses, does not move with the carriage, “ because it is *nothing*; and though the soul “ be a real substance, it bears no more rela-“ tion to place, than if it had been nothing “ at all.” He adds †, in order to explain

\* P. 271.      † P. 272.      † P. 273.

how

how the soul can have an idea of extension and of space, when itself bears no relation to either, that “ though the soul be “ incapable of motion, like the body, it “ doth not fail to contain eminently within “ itself that quality of matter, and therefore “ is capable of transferring it upon matter, “ and of supposing it to belong to matter.”

Afterwards\*, in explaining what is meant by the soul’s willing and acting *in its own body*, he says, that “ these expressions, the “ *soul is in the body, thinks in the body, and goes out of the body*, signify nothing but “ that the soul is *united to the body*, that it “ thinks in a dependence upon that union, “ and that, after a certain time, the soul will “ be no longer united with that body; but “ that the soul is not placed in the body as “ the *brain is in the skull*, or that it is in the “ place where the body is.” How unintelligibly are persons reduced to talk, when they quit the road of common sense, forming their systems not from *facts and appearances*, but from *imagination*.

The author of *Letters on Materialism*, addressed to myself, seems to think that he has said something to the purpose, with respect to this difficulty, arising from *the place of spirits*, by considering *space* as nothing more than an *ideal phenomenon arising from the extensive order of co-existing bodies*. As this expression, I

\* P. 275.

own, conveys no clear idea to me, I shall lay before my readers the whole paragraph, because, though I am not able to get any light from it, it is possible that another may.

“ To your second objection, that properly speaking, *your mind is no more in your body, than it is in the moon*; because it is incapable of bearing the least relation to space? I answer, matter, indeed, occupies space, to which spirit has no relation; that is, matter, as a compounded substance, bears, in its various parts, a relation to other bodies. Space, in itself, is nothing real, it is only an ideal phenomenon arising from the extensive order of co-existing bodies. Take from the creation every body, or, which amounts to the same, every being capable of viewing them, and space will no longer subsist.”

Now it appears to me, that it is impossible, even *in idea*, to suppose the annihilation of space. Let any person but for a moment suppose the annihilation of all matter, which is not difficult, and then consider whether the annihilation of space will necessarily follow. I do not mean *in imagination*, like the idea of things tending to fall downwards on the opposite side of the globe of the earth, but *in the nature of things*.

Afterwards this writer considers the presence of the mind with the body, as *attested by its action upon it*, so that still the spirit, properly speaking, is *nowhere*, and has *no motion*, not-with-

withstanding its strict union with, and its constant action upon, a body which is necessarily confined to some particular place, and which it obliges to change its place at pleasure. How these notions strike others I cannot tell; to me nothing can appear more whimsical, or extravagant.

## P A R T II.

*Of the MUTUAL INFLUENCES of the Soul and the Body.*

IT is contended for by all metaphysicians, who maintain the doctrine of any proper *immaterial principle*, that *spirit* and *body* can have no *common property*; and when it is asked, How, then, can they *act upon one another*; and how can they be so intimately connected as to be continually and necessarily subject to each other's influence? it is acknowledged to be a *difficulty*, and a *mystery* that we cannot comprehend. But had this question been considered with due attention, what has been called a *difficulty* would, I doubt not, have been deemed an *impossibility*; or such a *mystery* as that of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, becoming the real body and blood of Christ, or that of each of the three persons in the Trinity being equally God, and yet there being no more Gods than one; which, in the eye

eye of common sense, are not properly *difficulties*, or *mysteries*, but direct *contradictions*; such as that of a thing *being* and *not being* at the same time.

Let a man torture his imagination as much as he pleases, I will pronounce it to be impossible for him to conceive even the possibility of *mutual action* without some *common property*, by means of which the things that *act* and *re-act* upon each other, may have some *connexion*. A substance that is *hard* may act upon, and be acted upon by, another hard substance, or even one that is *soft*, which, in fact, is only relatively *less hard*: but it is certainly impossible that it should affect, or be affected by, a substance that can make *no resistance at all*, and especially a kind of substance that cannot, with any propriety of speech, be said to be even *in the same place* with it. If this be not an *impossibility*, I really do not know what is so.

But admitting that what appears to me to be an absolute impossibility, viz. that substances which have no common property can, nevertheless, affect, and be affected by each other, to be no more than a difficulty; it is however a difficulty of such magnitude, as far to exceed that of conceiving that the principle of sensation may possibly consist with matter; and, therefore, if, of two difficulties, it be most philosophical to take the *least*, we must, of course, abandon the hypothesis of two *heterogeneous and incompatible principles in man*,

man, which is clogged with the greater difficulty of conception, and admit that of the *uniformity of his nature*, which is only attended with a less difficulty.

The great difficulty that attends the supposition of the union of the soul and body, came in with the Cartesian hypothesis, which goes upon the idea that the essence of mind is *thought*, and the essence of body *extension*, exclusive of every property that had before been supposed to be common to them both, and by which they might influence one another. And it is very amusing to observe the different hypotheses that have been formed to account for the soul receiving ideas by the corporeal senses, and for the motion of the body in consequence of the volition of the soul.

That the body and mind have no physical influence upon one another, Descartes could not but allow. He therefore supposed that the impression of external objects, was only the *occasional*, and not the *efficient cause* of sensation in the mind; that volition also was only the occasional, and not the efficient cause of the motion of the muscles; and that in both these cases the real efficient cause was the immediate agency of the Deity, exerted according to certain rules which he invariably followed. Thus, whenever an object is presented, the divine Being impresses the mind, and whenever a volition takes place, he produces the corresponding motion in the muscular system.

Malebranche

Malebranche refined upon this hypothesis, supposing that we perceive the ideas of things not only by the *divine agency*, but *in the divine mind itself*; all ideas being first in the divine mind, and there perceived by us. A general view of his system, with the reasons on which it is founded, is thus given by Lord Bolingbroke \*.

“ We cannot perceive any thing that is  
“ not intimately united to the soul; but there  
“ being no proportion between the soul and  
“ material things, these cannot be united to it,  
“ or perceived by it. Our souls are, indeed,  
“ united to our bodies, but there is a manner  
“ of union necessary to perception, and an-  
“ other that is not so. God, who is a sub-  
“ stance, and the only intelligible substance,  
“ is intimately united to our souls by his pre-  
“ sence. He is the *place of spirits*, as *space* is  
“ the *place of bodies*; and as he must have in  
“ himself the ideas of all the beings that he  
“ has created, we may see those ideas in God,  
“ as he is pleased to shew them to us.”

The celebrated mathematician and metaphysician, Leibnitz, was as sensible of the impossibility of all proper connexion, or influence, between matter and spirit, as the Cartesians, but he explained the correspondence there is between them in quite another, though not a more satisfactory manner; forming a system, which has obtained the name of the *pre-established harmony*. For, admitting

\* See his Works, vol. iii. p. 543.

the necessary and physical operation of all causes, mental and corporeal, he supposes that the whole train of volitions, from a man's birth to his death, would have taken place in the mind in the same order, if there had been no body connected with it; and, on the other hand, that all the motions and other affections of the body (being properly an automaton) would have been the same, if there had been no soul connected with it: but that it is pre-established by the divine Being, that the volitions of the one, and the motions of the other, should strictly correspond, just as they would have done, if they had really been *cause* and *effect* to each other.

Neither of these hypotheses having given lasting satisfaction, the defenders of the modern doctrine of immateriality have generally contented themselves with supposing, that there is some *unknown real influence* between the soul and the body, but that the connection is a *mystery* to us. And this is not the first absurdity, and impossibility, that has found a convenient shelter under that term.

The learned Beausobre acknowledges this difficulty, even with respect to the Deity himself, but he gives us no assistance with respect to the solution of it. "If," says he\*, "the substance of the first mover be "absolutely immaterial, without extension, "and without size (*grandeur*) one cannot "conceive how it should give motion to mat-

\* Vol. i. p. 483.

"ter;

“ ter; because such a substance can have no hold (*prise*) of them, any more than they have upon it. We must, therefore, have recourse to the christian system, according to which, God acts upon matter by an act of his will only.” But if the substance of a spirit cannot act upon matter, how can the mere *volition*, which is the mere act of a spirit, affect it?

Mr. Baxter, who ascribes so much to the agency of the Deity, and so little to matter, is, as might be expected, peculiarly embarrassed with this difficulty. According to him, all the properties of matter, as attraction, repulsion, and cohesion, are the immediate agency of the divine Being. Consequently, as we perceive material things by means of these their *powers*, it but too plainly follows, that, in fact, matter is wholly superfluous; for if it exists, all its operations and effects are resolvable into the pure unaided operation of the Deity. Such a philosopher cannot but be puzzled to answer Bishop Berkley, who supposed, that the divine Being himself presented the ideas of all things to our minds, and that nothing material exists. The following appears to me to be a very poor attempt to maintain the real use of matter to impress the mind.

“ Those philosophers,” says he\*, “ who allow the objects of our ideas to exist, affirm, I think, without necessity, that

\* Vol. ii. p. 333.

" the sovereign mind produces the ideas of  
 " them in us, in so far, I mean, as the objects  
 " themselves may do this, or otherwise than  
 " by co-operation. Matter I know cannot  
 " act of itself, as it acts only by resistance.  
 " But if the resistance between the matter of  
 " our bodies, and other matter, be enough  
 " to excite the idea of their resistance in our  
 " minds, it would be unnecessary to suppose  
 " God to excite that idea, and the resistance  
 " itself to have no effect. And if we do not  
 " allow the matter of our bodies affects our  
 " minds directly, and by itself, the union be-  
 " tween them may seem to be, in a great  
 " measure, to no purpose."

What does this amount to, but that, since matter *does* exist, it must be of some use, though Mr. Baxter's general hypothesis, agreeably to which he here asserts, that *matter cannot act of itself*, leaves so very little to it, that it might very well have been spared. Pity, that so mischievous a thing, as he every where represents matter to be, should have been introduced at all, when, without the aid of superior power, it could not do even that mischief.

Mr. Baxter seems to have thought, that the connexion between the soul and the body subsisted only during a state of *vigilance*; for that, though during sleep, the soul, as he says \*, "is *always active and percipient*, and is "never without some real perception, it most

\* Vol. ii. p. 11.

" evidently

“ evidently ceases to act and perceive by the “ body.” It is, therefore, in fact, in an unembodied state. It is pity, that we have no evidence of what passes in that state; but that, in the moment of the re-union of the soul to the body, on awaking from sleep, all that passed in this intermediate state is forgotten.

Whatever passes in *dreams*, this philosopher supposes, not to be any thing that the soul is concerned in, but the work of other intellectual agents, which occupy the sensory the moment that the soul abandons it. If we ask, why the soul thus abandons the sensory, he says, it is on account of the “ *expence of animal spirits*, “ necessary to keep the former impressions “ patent, and to produce new ones, and that “ the fatigue of continuing to do this is in- “ tolerable.” But as it is not the *soul* that is fatigued, but the *body* only, is there not the same expence of animal spirits, whether the proper soul of the man, or some other spirit, be at work in the sensory? The same *quantity of thought* must be attended with the same expence of animal spirits.

The author of *La vraye Philosophie* has a very singular manner of helping this great difficulty concerning the soul acting upon the body. I shall only quote the passage without making any remark upon it. “ Without “ doubt,” says he\*, “ it is not by *thought* “ that the soul moves the body, for as it is

\* P. 277.

“ not by thought, that the soul enriches corporeal bodies with colours and extension, “ neither is it by thought that it acts upon matter, and puts it in motion. It does both these things, and many others of a similar nature, by its own *energy*. The supreme Being, in creating it, willed that it should have, in an eminent manner, the properties of matter, without having the imperfections of it.”

Others think to provide for the necessary mutual action and re-action between soul and body, by imagining, that there may be something like common properties between them, though by this means they evidently destroy the distinction between these two substances. This is remarkably the case with the author of *Letters on Materialism*.

“ You tell us,” says he\*, “ that matter and spirit are always described, as having not one common property, by means of which they can affect, or act upon each other.—This may be true in the opinion of those philosophers, who consider all matter as passive and inert, void of every species of force, action, or energy. But probably, such negative attributes can scarcely constitute the nature of any being. In every sentiment, indeed, the properties of these two substances must, in part, at least, essentially differ, because their natures are ever said to

\* P. 37.

“ be

“ be *diffimilar*; yet, it does not hence follow,  
“ that they may not be endowed with powers  
“ whereby mutually to affect and act upon  
“ each other. A being of a superior order  
“ may act on an inferior one, placed higher  
“ on the scale. It has acquired nobler pro-  
“ perties, but it is not therefore deprived of  
“ such *inferior qualities* as are not unalliable  
“ with the more exalted species. Particular-  
“ ly, this must be the case where the superior  
“ being constitutes a part of the same gene-  
“ ral system? Thus will the soul be able  
“ to act on matter, and consequently on its  
“ own body, which experience likewise seems  
“ to confirm.

“ Why may not matter also act upon spi-  
“ rit, at least, the most *exalted and refined part*  
“ of matter, in a manner, perhaps, inexpli-  
“ cable, but analogous to its inferior nature  
“ and powers? Thus reciprocally will the  
“ body act upon the soul. For this nothing  
“ seems more requisite than that matter, in  
“ its component elements, should be possessed  
“ of an *active force*, justly proportioned to  
“ their order, and rank of being. It must  
“ reside in the elements, and these must be  
“ *simple*, because no force could ever inhere  
“ in a substance ever divisible; and were not  
“ the *elements active*, their *compounds* never  
“ could be; no more than a percipient brain  
“ could arise from impercipient particles.  
“ The material elements then, I conceive to  
“ be *simple* and *active*, active in various de-

“ grees,

“ grees, according to their scale of being, or  
“ the part they are by infinite wisdom destin-  
“ ed to fill. The human body, a compound  
“ of these elements, and the *brain* particu-  
“ larly, must be conceived as an instrument  
“ mounted in the most exact accord of parts  
“ to parts, and as endowed with the greatest  
“ energetic powers of which body is suscepti-  
“ ble. It is thus rendered a fit habitation for  
“ a substance simple and highly active, as is  
“ the soul.

“ The soul, as a superior being, must have,  
“ additionally, other superior attributes, some  
“ of which may be roused into action by the  
“ impulse of an inferior agent, the body,  
“ whilst the more eminent (though not, from  
“ the pre-established laws of union, indepen-  
“ dent in their operations) are, however, out  
“ of the reach of any immediate and direct  
“ bodily action. Thus will the various men-  
“ tal powers be progressively brought into  
“ action, and man will feel, will perceive,  
“ will think, and will reason, just as the re-  
“ spective operative causes exert their influ-  
“ ence.

“ In the system of *occasional causes* (where-  
“ in all matter is supposed to be passive and  
“ lifeless, and wherein even the soul itself,  
“ though said to be active, never *acts*) the  
“ Deity is introduced as the only mover, and  
“ real agent, but is represented, as ever deter-  
“ mined to act by the view of the different  
“ states in which he himself has placed the  
“ external

“ external beings. The doctrine of *physical influence* is, in my opinion, the only philosophical notion. Here the two substances mutually *act* and *re-act* upon each other.”

I do not imagine that the more acute immaterialists will think themselves under any obligation to this defender of their principles, either for giving spirit such *inferior qualities* as are not unalliable with the more exalted species of matter, or for enduing matter with that *active power*, which is generally thought peculiar to spirit; because, in fact, this hypothesis entirely confounds the two substances, and lays a foundation for the grossest materialism. For the most *exalted and refined part of matter* cannot be deemed to differ essentially from the *grossest matter*. For, difference in size is all that the terms *exalted* and *refined* can possibly signify when applied to matter. An immaterial soul, therefore, must be wholly incapable of action and re-action with the most exalted and refined, as well as with the grossest corporeal system. A soul, capable of this mutual action with body, must have something gross in itself, and therefore must be degraded from holding that very high and distinguished rank in the scale of being, which has been assigned to it by those who consider it as *infinitely superior to matter*.

This writer also says, that the *active force* which he ascribes to matter, must reside in the simple *elements* of it, because, as he says, “ no force could ever inhere in a substance ever divisible,

“ divisible, and were not the elements active  
“ their compounds never could be so.” But  
did not this writer know, that it is even  
demonstrable that *matter is infinitely divisible*,  
and that, therefore, according to his own con-  
cession, no active force *can* ever inhere in it?  
This writer, therefore, acknowledging, as he  
does, the necessity of a *physical influence* be-  
tween the body and the mind, must necessa-  
rily abandon the notion of *two distinct prin-  
ciples*, and adopt that of the *uniform composition  
of the whole man*.

The vulgar, who consider *spirit* as a *thin  
aërial substance*, would be exceedingly puzzled  
if they were to endeavour to realize the mo-  
dern idea of a proper *immaterial being*; since, to  
them, it would seem to have nothing *positive*  
in its nature, but to be only a *negation of prop-  
erties*, though disguised under the positive  
appellation of *spirit*. To them it must appear  
to be the idea of *nothing at all*, and to be in-  
capable of supporting any properties.

Metaphysicians, however, affirm, that we  
have as clear an idea of *spirit*, as we have of  
matter, each being equally the unknown sup-  
port of known properties, *matter* of exten-  
sion and solidity, and *spirit* of sensation and  
thought. But still, since the *substance* is con-  
fessedly *unknown* to us, it must also be un-  
known to us what *properties* it is capable of  
supporting; and, therefore, unless there be a  
real inconsistency in the properties themselves,  
those which have hitherto been ascribed to  
both

both substances may belong to either of them.

For this reason, Mr. Locke, who maintains the immateriality of the soul, and yet asserts that, for any thing we know to the contrary, matter may have the property of thought superadded to it, ought to have concluded, that this is really the case; since, according to the rules of philosophizing, we ought not to multiply causes without necessity, which in this case he does not pretend to.

I shall conclude this section with a quotation from the author of *Reflections on the Existence of the soul, and of the Existence of God*, as represented in the *Examen du Fatalisme*\*, "If," says he, "the operations ascribed to the mind may result from the powers of matter, why should we suppose a being that is useless, and which solves no difficulty? It is easy to see that the properties of matter do not exclude those of intelligence, but it cannot be imagined how a being, which has no property besides intelligence, can make use of matter. In reality, how can this substance, which bears no relation to matter, be sensible of it, or perceive it? In order to see things, it is necessary that they make an impression upon us, that there be some relation between us and them, but what can be this relation?" I shall only observe upon this passage, that we can never leave the road of

\* Vol. i. p. 390.

## S E C T I O N    V I I I .

*Of Spirits having Extension!*

SEVERAL of the moderns finding themselves embarrassed with the idea of a soul, as being without any extension or relation to space, have admitted these properties to belong to spirits. But they do not seem to have considered how inconsistent it is with their general doctrine, and the arguments by which it is supported, to admit thus much, or the peculiar difficulties with which this scheme is clogged. These, therefore, I shall proceed to represent.

1. The chief reason why the principle of thought has been supposed to be incompatible with matter, is, that there is no *conceivable connexion* between *thought* and *solidity*, that the two ideas are altogether different and *diffimilar*. But is there any more conceivable connexion between thought and mere *extension*? Are ideas, according to the opinion of the persons who hold this doctrine, extended things? Is the *judgment* extended, is the will *extended*, or have the *passions* extension? How, then, do they require an extended substance in which to inhere? If there be some unknown

known reason why they *do* require an extended *substratum*, may not this substance have *solidity* added to its extension; the idea of *solidity* not being more foreign to the idea of *thought*, than that of *extension*, nor more dissimilar to it.

2. The essence of the soul, it is said, cannot be matter, because it would then be *divisible*; but is not every thing that is extended divisible? It is not the *solidity* of bodies that makes them capable of division so properly as their *extension*. It is this property that makes division possible; and then all that is necessary to actual division is *discerptibility*, or the possible separation of one part of its substance from another. For wherever there is *extension*, there must be conceivable parts, viz. a half, a third, a fourth, &c. But till the substance of which the soul (exclusive of its power of thinking) consists, be more known to us, so that we can subject it to a rigorous examination, it is impossible to say whether it be more or less *discerptible* than any species of matter; for all that we know of it is, that it is *extended*, and that it *thinks*. The firmness of its texture, is a thing of which we have no knowledge at all; and if it be any thing more than *mere space*, it must have that which may be called *texture*, or *consistence*, solid or fluid, elastic or non-elastic, &c. &c. Consequently, it may, for any thing we know, be as corruptible, and perishable, as the body. The boasted *unity of consciousness*, and *simplicity*

*city of perception and thought*, can be no security against division and dissolution, unless they inheret in a substance naturally incapable of division, and consequently of dissolution.

3. As divisibility may always be predicated of any substance that is extended, and not infinite, I wish the advocates of this doctrine of extended spirit, would consider a little what would be the probable consequence of an actual division of it. Supposing the substance of a human soul to be divided into two equal parts (which to divine power must, at least, be possible) would the power of thinking be necessarily destroyed, or would the result be *two spirits*, of inferior powers, as well as of smaller size? If so, would each of them retain the consciousness of the whole undivided soul, or would the stock of ideas be equally divided between them?

4. As every created being must *exist* before it can *act*, I wish the advocates of this doctrine would consider what idea they can form of the extended substance of a spirit before it has acquired any ideas at all, and consequently before it has begun to think. In what will it differ from mere space? Whatever this state be, in what does it differ from the state of the soul whenever it ceases to think, as in a deep sleep, a swoon, or the state between death and the resurrection!

5. I would also submit it to the consideration of the partisans of *extended spiritualism*, what *size* or *shape* they would give to the human

human soul (for if it be extended, size and shape it must have) and whether some inconvenience may not arise to their system in the discussion of the question. If nothing can act but where it is, I should think that the soul must have the size and form of the brain, if not of the whole nervous system. For there is no region within the brain of less extent than the medullary part of it, that can be imagined to be the *sensorium*, or the immediate seat of sensation; and as the nerves consist of the same substance with the medullary part of the brain, and are properly a production, or part of it, I do not see why the soul should be confined to the size of the brain only, exclusive of the nerves; and then, as the nerves are in every part of the body, the soul would, in fact, be of the same form and size with the body to which it belongs, though with more interstices.

6. It is also a matter of some curiosity to the speculatist, to consider whether the size and form of these extended souls be invariable, or whether, as we suppose the body to undergo some change at the resurrection, in order to adapt it to its new mode of existence, the soul may not undergo a proportionable change, and be transformed together with it.

7. We are apt to impose upon ourselves, and to confound our understandings, by the use of *general terms*. To gain clear perceptions of things we must inspect them more closely, in order to discover what particular

and more *definite ideas* are necessarily comprized in the more general ones. Thus, while we content ourselves with saying, that man is a compound being, consisting of two substances, the one *corporeal*, and the other *spiritual*, the one both extended and solid, and the other extended indeed, but destitute of solidity; and that an intimate union subsists between them, so that they always *accompany* and *affect* one another (an impression upon the body causing a sensation in the mind, and a volition of the mind causing a motion of the body) we are satisfied. The hypothesis seems to correspond to the *first view* of the phenomena; and though we cannot help being staggered, when we consider this intimate union of two such *heterogeneous substances*, we still acquiesce in it, as an union effected by almighty power; and we are likewise repelled from a rigorous examination of it by the idea, however ill-founded, that our prospects of a future life are materially affected by it.

But a future life being secured to us by the promises of the gospel, upon *other and better principles*, we need not be afraid to consider what this supposed union of body and soul really implies, and it appears to me to imply that the soul, having *locality*, and *extension*, must have *solidity* also.

That the mind should move the body, and, at the same time, *move itself* along with the body, we may think a tolerably easy supposition; but what shall we say to the case of the body

body being moved during sleep, or a swoon, to which removal the mind does not at all contribute. It will hardly be said that, in this case, the soul is first of all left behind, in the place from which the body was taken, and that it afterwards *voluntarily* joins its former companion. And, if not, the motion of the mind must, in all cases, *necessarily* accompany the motion of the living body, or, in other words, the mind must be *involuntarily* dragged along with it. But can this motion be communicated from *body* to *mind* without real *impulse*, implying a *vis inertiae*, and *solidity*, without which, it should seem, that the one cannot lay hold of the other?

8. It will also, I think, be difficult to account for the separation of the soul from the body after death, unless the spiritual substance be supposed to be a proper constituent part of the *solid mass*, which, like fixed air in bodies, is set loose when the rest of the mass is dissolved by putrefaction, or otherwise. If putrefaction, or total dissolution, be the physical cause of this separation, is there not a good foundation for the practice of the Egyptians, who preserved the bodies of their friends as long as they possibly could, probably with a view of retaining their souls in them, or near them?

If the soul be really inseparable from the body, which is probably the opinion of those who maintain that, during the death of the body, the soul is in a state of *insensibility*

until the resurrection, what part of the body does it accompany ? If it be indiscerpible, it must be wholly in some one place ; and as all the constituent parts of every member of the body are completely dissolved and dispersed, it must, in fact, accompany some one of the *ultimate particles* ; and which of them can that be ?

If the extended spirit does *not* accompany any particle of the dissolved body, and all souls be preserved, during their dormant state, in some *general repository* (whether in the sun, the earth, or some part of the intermediate space) in what manner will the re-union of the souls, and their respective bodies, be effected at the resurrection ? Will it be by any thing like what is called *elective attraction* between them, or will it be effected by a new and express fiat of the deity ?

These objections do not much, if at all, affect the doctrine of *spirit bearing no relation to space*, or any speculation concerning the divine essence, which fills all space.

9. Many other queries will necessarily obtrude themselves on any person who shall begin to speculate on the nature of extended spiritual substances, which it will be impossible to dismiss without some degree of attention ; and it appears to me that, let the advocates for this doctrine answer them in whatever manner they please, they must occasion some degree of embarrassment, so as to leave a suspicion of the doctrine from which they

they arise, as wanting a sufficient foundation in probability and truth; such as, What is the origin, or commencement, of the extended spirit? Is every soul a separate creation, or, are souls propagated from each other like bodies? Does it grow in size with the growth of the body and brain? Are these extended spirits mutually penetrable to each other? There can be no doubt but that they must occupy a portion of the same universal space that is already occupied by the divine essence. Is the essence of these extended spirits similar to that of the deity, and will no impediment arise from this necessary mutual penetration?

Many more observations might be made on this notion of extended spirit, which appears to me not to have been sufficiently considered by those who hold it. They have concluded, or rather, have taken it for granted, that there is in man a soul distinct from his body, but they revolt at the idea of this soul having no extension, or relation to space, and therefore admit that it has these properties; but, being driven by mere necessity to admit thus much, they are unwilling to consider the subject any farther, and shut their eyes on all the concomitants and consequences of their concessions; though, if they would attend to them, they would find them such as would probably make them revolt at the whole system. Their arguments for a separate soul from the topics of thought being dissimilar to matter, from the unity of consciousness, indiscerptibility,

&c. properly belong to the advocates for refined spiritualism, and are impertinently and ineffectually alledged by those, who, admitting a real extension, and consequently real size and form in the soul, in vain imagine, that they are advocates for the doctrine of proper immateriality. In fact, they are themselves *semi-materialists*.

How easy is it to get rid of all the embarrassment attending the doctrine of a soul, in every view of it, by admitting, agreeably to all the phenomena, that the power of thinking belongs to the *brain* of a man, as that of walking to his feet, or that of speaking to his tongue; that, therefore, man, who is *one being*, is composed of *one kind of substance*, made of *the dust of the earth*; that when he dies, he, of course, ceases to think; but when his *sleeping dust* shall be re-animated at the resurrection, his power of thinking, and his consciousness, will be restored to him?

This system gives a real value to the doctrine of *a resurrection from the dead*, which is peculiar to revelation, on which alone the sacred writers build all our hope of a future life, and it explains the uniform language of the scriptures, which speak of one day of judgment for all mankind, and represent all the rewards of virtue, and all the punishments of vice, as taking place at that awful day, and not before. This doctrine of a resurrection was laughed at by the conceited Athenians, and will always be the subject of ridicule to persons

persons of a similar turn of mind; but it is abundantly confirmed to us by the well attested resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the promises of the gospel, established on all the miraculous events by which the promulgation of christianity was attended.

## SECTION IX.

*Of the VEHICLE of the Soul.*

MANY modern metaphysicians, finding some difficulty in uniting together things so discrepant in their nature, as a *pure immaterial substance*, and such *gross matter*, as that of which the human body and brain are composed, have imagined, that this connexion may be better cemented by means of some *intermediate material substance*, of a more refined and subtle nature than that which is the object of the senses of sight or touch. Upon the dissolution of the body by death, they suppose that this subtle *vehicle* of the soul is set loose from its connexion with it, and flies off, unperceived by any of the senses, together with the immaterial soul, from which it is inseparable, into the intermediate state.

This, in fact, is nothing more than taking the *ειδωλον* of the ancients, or the popular

*ghost* of all countries, which was all the thinking principle that they had any idea of, and making it a kind of *body* to something of which the ancients and the vulgar had no idea, But this modern vehicle of the soul is altogether a creature of imagination and hypothesis, and in reality without explaining any one phenomenon, or removing one real difficulty. For so long as the matter of which this vehicle consists, has what are supposed to be the essential properties of all matter, viz. *solid extent*, its union with a truly immaterial substance must be just as difficult to conceive, as if it had been the subject of all our corporal senses. To the vulgar, indeed, the *attenuation* of matter may make it seem to approach to the nature of *spirit*; but the philosopher knows that, in fact, no attenuation of matter brings it at all nearer to the nature of a substance that has no common property with matter.

Mr. Wollaston, however, who is certainly a very respectable writer, and treats pretty largely of this subject, of a vehicle for the soul, not attending to these obvious considerations, seems to consider the immaterial soul as a substance capable of the most intimate union with this subtle material vehicle. I shall present my reader with this writer's ideas on the subject, and subjoin some remarks upon it. I might quote what many others have advanced, but there is no end of pursuing such mere creatures of imagination, and the farther

ther discussion of the subject would be inexcusable trifling.

“ The human soul,” says Mr. Wollaston\*, “ is a cogitative substance, clothed in a material vehicle, or rather united to it, and as it were inseparably mixed (I had almost said incorporated) with it. These act in conjunction, that which affects the one, affecting the other.—The soul is detained in the body (the head or brain) by some sympathy, or attraction between this material vehicle and it, till the habitation is spoiled, and this mutual tendency interrupted (and perhaps turned into an aversion) by some hurt or disease, or by the decays and ruins of old age, or the like, happening to the body; and in the *interim*, by means of this vehicle, motions and impressions are communicated to and fro.”

Again, he says †, “ If we suppose the soul to be a being by nature made to inform some body, and that it cannot exist and act in a state of total separation from all body—that body which is so necessary to it, may be some fine vehicle, that dwells with it in the brain, and goes off with it at death—When it shall, in its proper vehicle, be let go, and take its flight into the open fields of heaven, it will then be bare to the immediate impression of objects. And why should not those impressions

\* P. 364.      † P. 370

“ which

“ which affected the nerves that moved, and  
“ affected the vehicle, and the soul in it,  
“ affect the vehicle immediately, when they  
“ are immediately made upon it, without the  
“ interposition of the nerves. The hand  
“ which feels an object at the end of a staff,  
“ may certainly be allowed to feel the same  
“ much better by immediate contact, without  
“ the staff.”

On this I would observe, that by whatever considerations it appears that a vehicle is necessary to the soul, the body must at least be equally necessary to the vehicle. For it by no means follows, that because external objects can affect the vehicle *through the body*, that therefore they would affect it at all, and much less better, without its assistance. It would then follow, that because the auditory nerves are affected with sounds, by means of the external and internal ear, that therefore sounds would be heard better without the ear, the vibrations of the air acting immediately upon the nerves themselves; and that because the brain is affected with the several sensations, by means of the nerves, that it would perceive every thing to much more advantage, if it were exposed to the influence of all those things to which the nerves are exposed. Whereas these are all contrary to fact.

On the contrary, there is the greatest reason to believe, that nothing is provided for us as a *means*, or *instrument* of sensation, but what

what was naturally proper, and even necessary for the purpose; and consequently that, if these means were withheld, the *end* could not be attained. Whereas, therefore, the only means by which we receive our sensations are the organs of sense, the nerves, and the brain, we ought to conclude, that without bodily organs, nerves, and brain, we could have no sensations or ideas.

There is something curious in Mr. Wollaston's notion concerning the *place of the soul*, as determined by the specific gravity of the gross body, or of the vehicle to which it is connected; copied, as it should seem, from Plato or Cicero, who give a similar account of the height to which the soul ascends after death, according as it is more or less weighed down by its vicious tendency to earthly things.

“ That general law,” says Wollaston\*, “ to which bodies are subject, makes it sink in this fluid of air, so much lighter than itself, keeps it down, and so determines the seat of it, and of the soul in it, to be upon the surface of this earth, where, or in whose neighbourhood, it was first produced. But then, when the soul shall be disengaged from the gross matter which now encloses and encumbers it, and either becomes naked spirit, or be only veiled in its own fine and obsequious vehicle, it must

\* P. 401.

“ at

“ at the same time be either freed from the  
“ laws of bodies, and fall under some other,  
“ which will carry it to some proper mansion  
“ or state ; or at least, by the old ones,  
“ be capable of mounting upwards, in pro-  
“ portion to the volatility of its vehicle, and  
“ of emerging out of these regions, into some  
“ medium more suitable, and (if the philo-  
“ sopher may say so) more equilibrious.”

This has the appearance of being written in ridicule of the *vehicular system*, but it was meant to be a just exposition and defence of it. I would observe also, that this writer, taking it for granted, that all these vehicles are specifically lighter than the atmosphere that surrounds the earth, and therefore must ascend in it, makes no provision for the *descent* of any unembodied spirit into any of the *lower regions*, where most of the moderns dispose of the souls of the wicked, and where all the ancients placed the receptacle of all souls without distinction.

Even Dr. Hartley, who ascribes so much to matter, and so little to any thing immaterial in man (nothing but the faculty of simple *perception*) yet supposes, that there is something *intermediate* between the soul and the gross body, which he distinguishes by the name of *the infinitesimal elementary body*. But, great as is my admiration of Dr. Hartley, it is very far from carrying me to adopt every thing in him. His language, in this instance, conveys no clear ideas to my mind, and I consider both his

his *intermediate body*, and *immaterial soul*, as an encumbrance upon his system, which, in every other respect, is most admirably simple.

I do not find, that any thing has been said of the state of the vehicle of the soul during sleep. Does the vehicle require rest as well as the body and brain; and if the soul think during sleep, where is the repository of the ideas on which it is employed? Are they contained in the vehicle, or the soul itself.

Indeed, every thing relating to sleep, is a very puzzling phenomenon, on the supposition of the distinction between the soul and the body, especially the little evidence that can be pretended of the soul being employed at all in a state of really sound sleep, exclusive of dreaming. And surely, if there be a soul distinct from the body, and it be sensible of all the changes that take place in the corporeal system to which it is attached, why does it not perceive that state of the body which is termed *sleep*; and why does it not *contemplate* the state of the body and brain during sleep, which might afford matter enough for reasoning and reflection? If no *new ideas* could be transmitted to it at that time, it might employ itself upon the stock which it had acquired before, if they really had inhered in it, and belonged to it; taking the opportunity of ruminating upon its *old ideas*, when it was so circumstanced, that it could acquire no *new ones*.

All

All this we should naturally expect if the soul was a substance really distinct from the body, and if the ideas properly *belonged* to this substance, so that it was capable of carrying them all away with it, when the body was reduced to dust. The soul, during the sleep of the body, might be expected to approach to the state in which it would be when the body was dead, *death* being often compared to a more sound *sleep*. For if it be capable of thinking, and feeling, when the powers of the body shall entirely *cease*, it *might* be capable of the same kind of sensation and action when those powers are only *suspended*.

## S E C T I O N X.

### OBJECTIONS to the System of Materialism considered.

MOST of the objections that have been made to the possibility of the powers of sensation and thought belonging to matter, are entirely founded on a mistaken notion of matter, as being necessarily *inert* and *impene- trable*, and not a thing possessed of no other powers than those of *attraction* and *repulsion*, and such as may be consistent with them. With such objections as these I have properly

no

no concern, because they do not affect my peculiar system. Some objections, however, which are founded on the *popular notion of matter*, it may be worth while to consider; because, while they remain unnoticed, they may impede the reception of any system that bears the name of *materialism*, how different soever it may be from any thing that has hitherto been so denominated. I shall, therefore, briefly reply to every objection that can be thought *considerable*, either in itself, or on account of the person who has proposed it.

#### OBJECTION I. *From the difficulty of conceiving how Thought can arise from Matter.*

IT is said, we can have no conception how sensation, or thought, can arise from matter, they being things so very different from it, and bearing no sort of resemblance to any thing like *figure* or *motion*; which is all that can result from any modification of matter, or any operation upon it.

But this is an argument which derives all its force from our *ignorance*. *Different* as are the properties of sensation and thought, from such as are usually ascribed to matter, they may, nevertheless, inhere in the same substance, unless we can shew them to be absolutely *incompatible* with one another. There is no apparent resemblance between the ideas of *sight*, and those of *hearing*, or *smelling*, &c. and

and yet they all exist in the same mind, which is possessed of the very different senses and faculties appropriated to each of them. Besides, this argument, from our not being able to *conceive* how a thing can be, equally affects the immaterial system: for we have no more conception how the powers of sensation and thought can inhere in an *immaterial*, than in a *material* substance. For, in fact, we have no distinct idea either of the *properties*, or of the *substance* of mind or spirit. Of the latter, we profess to know nothing, but that it is not matter; and even of the property of *perception*, it seems to be as impossible that we should fully comprehend the nature of it, as that the eye should see itself.

Besides, they who maintain the intimate union of substances so discrepant in their natures as *matter* and *immaterial spirit*, of which they certainly cannot pretend to have any conception, do, with a very ill grace, urge any objection against the system of materialism, derived from our ignorance of the *manner* in which a principle of thought may be superadded to matter.

I would observe, that by the *principle of thought*, I mean nothing more than the power of *simple perception*, or our consciousness of the presence and effect of sensations and ideas. For I shall, in these Disquisitions, take it for granted, that this one property of the mind being admitted, all the particular phenomena of sensation and ideas, respecting their *retention*,

*tion, association, &c.* and the various faculties of the mind, to which those affections of our sensations and ideas give rise, as *memory, judgment, volition, the passions, &c.* will admit of a satisfactory illustration on the principles of *vibration*, which is an affection of a material substance. I, therefore, admit of no argument for the *spirituality* of the soul, from the consideration of the *exquisiteness, subtlety, or complexity* of the mental powers, on which much stress has been laid by some; there being in matter a capacity for affections as subtle and complex as any thing that we can affirm concerning those that have hitherto been called *mental affections*. I consider Hartley's *Theory of the Mind*, as a *practical answer* to all objections of this kind.

### OBJECTION II. *From abstract Ideas.*

“ Matter,” says Mr. Wollaston \*, “ can never, by itself, entertain abstracted, or general ideas, such as many in our minds are. For could it reflect upon what passes within itself, it could possibly find there nothing but material and particular impressions. Abstract and metaphysical ideas could not be found upon it.”

But Mr. Locke, and others, have observed, that all actual ideas are, in fact, *particular*, and that abstraction is nothing more than

\* P. 357.

leaving out of a number of resembling ideas, what is peculiar to each, and considering only what is common to them all.

OBJECTION III. *From the Influence of Reasons.*

Mr. Wollaston argues, that the mind cannot be material, because it is influenced by *reasons*. "When I begin to move myself," says he \*, "I do it for some reason, and with respect to some end.—But who can imagine matter to be moved by arguments, or ever ranked syllogisms and demonstrations among levers and pulleys?—Do we not see, in conversation, how a pleasant thing will make people break out into laughter, a rude thing into a passion, and so on. These affections cannot be the physical effects of the words spoken, because then they would have the same effect, whether they were understood or not. It is, therefore, the *sense* of the words, which is an immaterial thing, that by passing through the understanding, and causing that which is the subject of the intellectual faculties to influence the body, produces those motions in the spirits, blood, and muscles."

I answer, that, since it is a fact, that *reasons*, whatever they be, do ultimately move matter, there is certainly much less difficulty

\*. P. 355.

in conceiving that they may do this, in consequence of their being the affection of some material substance; than upon the hypothesis of their belonging to a substance that has no common property with matter. It is acknowledged, that syllogisms and demonstrations are not levers and pulleys, but neither are the effects of gun-powder, in removing the heaviest bodies, produced by levers and pulleys, and yet they are produced by a material cause. To say that *reasons* and *ideas* are not things material, or the affections of a material substance, is to take for granted the very thing to be proved.

#### OBJECTION IV. *From the Unity of Consciousness.*

It is asserted, that the soul of man cannot be material and divisible, because the *principle of consciousness*, which comprehends the whole of the thinking power, is necessarily simple, and indivisible. But before this can be admitted as any argument, it should be strictly defined what *unity of consciousness* means. I profess, that those who have hitherto written about it, have given me no clear ideas upon the subject. The only meaning that I can annex to the words *unity of consciousness*, is a feeling or perception of the *unity of my nature, or being*; but all that can be inferred from this is, that I am only *one person, one sentient*

sentient and thinking being; and not two persons, or two sentient or thinking beings; which is no more an argument that this one sentient being cannot be divided, than that a *sphere*, being one thing, is a proof that it likewise consists of indivisible materials. It is true, that it is impossible to divide a sphere so as to make it two spheres; but still the *matter* of which it consists is, strictly speaking, divisible, and the matter of it may be so disunited, that it shall intirely cease to be a sphere. So, though that *system of intelligence*, which we call the *soul of a man*, cannot be divided into two systems of intelligence, it may be so divided, or dissolved, as to become no system of intelligence at all. If any person can define *unity of consciousness* in a manner more favourable to the proof of the immateriality of the soul, I shall be glad to hear it, and to attend to it.

OBJECTION V. *From a separate Consciousness not belonging to every Particle of the Brain.*

It is said to be a decisive argument against materialism, that the *consciousness of existence* cannot be annexed to the whole *brain*, as a *system*, while the individual *particles* of which it consists are separately unconscious; since the whole brain, being a collection of parts, cannot

not possess any thing but what is derived from them\*.

But surely there may be a separate *unity of the whole nervous system*, as well as of *one atom*; and if the perception that we call *consciousness*, or that of any other *complex idea*, necessarily consists in, or depends upon, a very *complex vibration*, it cannot possibly belong to a single *atom*, but must belong to a *vibrating system*, of some extent.

A certain *quantity of nervous system* is necessary to such complex ideas and affections as belong to the human mind; and the idea of *self*, or the feeling that corresponds to the pronoun *I* (which is what some may mean by *consciousness*) is not essentially different from other *complex ideas*, that of our *country*, for instance. This is a term by which we denote a part of the world subject to that form of government, by the laws of which we ourselves are bound, as distinguished from other countries, subject to other political systems of government; and the term *self* denotes that substance, which is the seat of that particular set of sensations and ideas, of which those that are then recollected make a part, as distinguished from other substances, which are the seat of similar sets of sensations and ideas. But it may be necessary to consider this objection, with respect to the faculty of simple *perception*, exclusive of the general feeling of *consciousness*.

\* See Letters on Materialism, p. 67.

For the same reason that “*activity*, and *perceptivity* cannot arise from joining together “*dead and inert parts*,” which is the language of Mr. Baxter, no *powers* whatever could be affirmed of any mass of matter, because matter being infinitely divisible, it is impossible that the *ultimate parts* of it can be possessed of any powers. And there is no more reason in nature, why perception may not belong to a *system of matter*, as such, and not to the *component parts of it*, than that *life* should be the property of an intire animal system, and not of the separate parts of it. It might also be said, that no *harmony* could result from a harpsichord, because the single notes, separately taken, can make no harmony. Mr. Baxter, however, says\*, that “*if an active and perceptive substance have parts, these parts must of necessity be active and perceptive.*”

This argument has been much hackneyed, and much confided in by metaphysicians; but, for my part, I cannot perceive the least force in it. Unless we had a clearer idea, than it appears to me, that any person can pretend to have, of the nature of *perception*, it must be impossible to say, *a priori*, whether a single particle, or a system of matter, be the proper seat of it. But judging from *appearances*, which alone ought to determine the judgment of philosophers, an *organized system*, which requires a considerable *mass of matter*, is requisite for this purpose. Also, judging

\* *Essay on the Soul*, p. 236.

by observation, a mass of matter, duly organized, and endued with *life*, which depends upon the due circulation of the fluids, and a proper tone of the solid parts, must necessarily have *sensation* and *perception*. To judge of the *perceptive power*, without any regard to *facts*, and *appearances*, is merely giving scope to our imaginations, without laying them under any restraint; and the consequence of building systems in this manner is but too obvious. It is high time to abandon these random hypotheses, and to form our conclusions with respect to the faculties of the *mind*, as well as the properties and powers of *matter*, by an attentive observation of *facts*, and cautious inferences from them.

#### OBJECTION VI. *From the Comparison of Ideas, &c.*

It is said, there can be no *comparison of ideas*, and consequently no *judgment*, or *perception of harmony or proportion*, which depends upon comparison, on the system of materialism; for that, if the ideas to be compared be *VIBRATIONS* in the brain, they must be perceived by a different substance, inspecting, as it were, and considering that state of the brain\*.

But if the brain itself be the percipient power, as well as the subject of these vibra-

\* See Letters on Materialism, p. 63.

tions, it must both feel the effect of every particular impression that is made upon it, and also all that can result from the combination of ever so many impressions at the same time; and as things that *agree*, and things that *disagree*, cannot impress the brain in the same manner, there is certainly as much foundation for a perception of the difference between *truth* and *falsehood*, as upon the hypothesis, of a superintending mind. For the mind, it is evident, has no ideas but what result from the state of the brain, as the author quoted above very expressly allows. Consequently, if there be no impression upon the brain, there can be no perception in the mind; so that, upon any hypothesis that is consistent with known facts, there can be no state of mind to which there is not a correspondent state of the brain; and, therefore, if the brain itself *can* be the seat of feeling, or of consciousness, its feeling or consciousness may be just as *various* and *extensive* as that of the independent mind itself could be. It is impossible there should be any difference in this case, unless the mind could have sensations and ideas independent of the state of the brain, which every observation proves to be impossible.

It is a very gross mistake of the system of materialism to suppose, with the author of the *Letters on Materialism*, that the vibrations of the brain are themselves the perceptions. For it is easy to form an idea of there being vibrations, without any perceptions accompanying

panying them. But it is supposed that the brain, besides its *vibrating power*, has super-added to it a *percipient* or *sentient power*, likewise; there being no reason that we know why this power may not belong to it. And this, once admitted, all that we know concerning the human mind will be found in the material nervous system; and this *percipient power* may as well belong to one *system* as to one *atom*.

### OBJECTION VII. *From the Nature of Attention.*

It has been said, that *attention* is a state of mind that cannot be the effect of vibration \*. But as *simple attention* to any idea is nothing more than the *simple perception* of it, so a *continued attention* to it is nothing more than a *continued perception* of it; which is the necessary consequence either of the constant presence of the object which excites it, or of the presence of other associated ideas, in circumstances in which it must necessarily make the greatest figure, and strike the mind the most.

I shall here introduce some more of Mr. Wollaston's arguments to prove, that the body and the mind must be different substances, though I think them unworthy of him. My replies will be very short, and sometimes *ad hominem*.

\* See Letters on Materialism, p. 147.

OBJECTION VIII. *From the Difference between the Ideas and the Mind employed about them.*

“ That which peruses the impressions and traces of things in the fantasy and memory, must be something distinct from the brain, or that upon which those impressions are made. Otherwise it would contemplate itself, and be both *reader* and *book*\*.”

But what is the distinction between the reader and the book, in an unembodied spirit, which certainly must have a repository for its ideas, as well as be provided with a principle of intelligence to make use of them? Will not this argument affect the simplicity and indivisibility of such a spirit, to say nothing of superior intelligences, and of the divine Mind?

OBJECTION IX. *From the Expression, MY BODY, &c.*

“ As a man considers his own body, does it not appear to be something different from the *considerer*, and when he uses this expression, *my body*, or *the body of me*, may it not properly be demanded, who is meant by *me*, or what *my* relates to? —— Man being supposed a person consisting of two

\* Wollaston, p. 358.

“ parts,

“ parts, soul and body, the whole person  
“ may say of this, or that part of him, *the*  
“ *soul of me*, or *the body of me*. But if  
“ he were either all soul, or all body, and  
“ nothing else, he could not speak in this  
“ manner\*.”

According to this merely *verbal argument*, there ought to be something in man besides *all the parts* of which he consists. When a man says, *I devote my soul and body*, what is it that makes the devotement? It cannot be the things devoted. Besides, in Mr. Wollaston's own phrase, it ought, in strictness, to be the *body* only that says *my soul*. Nothing surely can be inferred from such phraseology as this, which, after all, is only derived from vulgar apprehensions.

OBJECTION X. *From the different Interests in Man.*

“ It is plain there are two different *interests*  
“ in man, on one side reason, on the other  
“ passion, which, being many times directly  
“ opposite, must belong to different subjects.  
“ There are upon many occasions contests,  
“ and, as it were, wars between the mind  
“ and the body, so far are they from being  
“ the same thing †.”

I answer, the passions themselves are more evidently at variance than passion and reason, and, therefore, by the same argument,

\* Wollaston, p. 359. † Wollaston, p. 350.  
ought

ought to be referred to different substances in the human constitution. If Mr. Wollaston meant to refer the *passions* to the body, there will be some danger left *desire*, *will*, and other faculties, always acknowledged to be *mental*, should go with them; and so, before he is aware of it, the whole man will be material, there being nothing left to belong to, or constitute the immaterial soul.

OBJECTION XI. *From the Mind supporting the Body.*

“ We may perceive something within us “ which *supports* the body (*keeps it up*) di- “ rect<sup>s</sup> its motions for the better preservation “ of it; when any hurts or evils befall it, “ finds out the means of its cure, and the like, “ without which it would fall to the ground, “ and undergo the fate of common matter. “ The body, therefore, must be considered “ as being under the direction and tuition of “ some other thing, which is (or should be) “ the governor of it, and consequently, upon “ this account, must be concluded to be dif- “ ferent from it\*.”

I answer, we also say, that *reason* controuls and directs the *passions*, influences the *will*, and makes use of the *memory*, that those and all the other faculties of the mind are subservient to reason; &c. But does it therefore

\* Wollaston, p. 350.

follow,

follow, that they belong to a different substance?

OBJECTION XII. *From the Self-moving Power of the Soul.*

The soul is represented by Mr. Baxter, and others, as *essentially active*, and possessed of a *self-moving power*, in opposition to *matter*, which is necessarily *inert* and *passive*.

But if we ask on what authority these positions are advanced, it is impossible they should produce a single *appearance* in favour of them. The soul, in its present state, and we have nothing else by which to judge of its powers, has not a single idea but what it receives by means of the organs of sense; and till it has got *ideas*, it is impossible that any of its *powers*, active, or passive, could have the least employment; so that they could not appear even to *exist*. Sensations and ideas comprehend all the objects of thought, and all the exertions, or emotions of the soul, as far as we can observe, always succeed sensations or ideas; and, to all appearance, are as much *occasioned* and *produced* by them, as any effect in nature can be said to be produced by its proper cause; the one invariably following the other, according to a certain established law.

In fact, a *ball*, acted upon by a foreign mechanical impulse, may just as well be said to have

have a self-moving power as the soul of man ; sensations and ideas being as properly an *impelling force* respecting the mind (since they always precede, and regulate both the judgment and the will) as the stroke of a rod, &c. is an impelling force with respect to the ball. Nothing can prove a self-moving power in the soul, but a clear case of the decision of the judgment, a determination of the will, or some other exertion of the mental faculties, *without any preceding sensations or ideas* ; or, at least, without such as usually precede such judgments, determinations, or exertions. But while those sensations and ideas, which cannot be denied to have a real *influence* upon the mind, always precede mental determinations, &c. it is impossible not to conclude, according to the established rules of philosophizing, that those sensations and ideas are the proper *moving powers* of the soul ; and that without them it would have been incapable of any motion or determination whatever. And this, if we judge at all from *observation* and *experience*, we must conclude to be actually the case.

### OBJECTION XIII. *From the unwearied Nature of the thinking Principle.*

Mr. Baxter likewise says\*, That “ the con-  
“ sideration of the indefeasibleness, or un-

\* *Essay on the Human Soul*, p. 433.

“ weariedness

“ weariness of the principle of thought in  
“ us, should perfectly satisfy us of the imma-  
“ teriality of our thinking part. We feel  
“ our bodies every now and then sinking down  
“ under their own infirmities; but the thing  
“ that thinks in us would never give over, if  
“ the body could keep up with it. It is busy  
“ all the day with the body, and all the night  
“ without the body, and all the day with the  
“ body again; and thus in a constant circle,  
“ without respite or intermission, that we can  
“ perceive by our strictest inquiry. For the  
“ body no sooner sinks down in weariness and  
“ slumber, than this thing within us enters  
“ upon other scenes of action, and hears and  
“ sees things worth inquiring into, and this  
“ without a subserviency of its organs, which  
“ are then disabled from their function.”

This is altogether a misrepresentation of the fact. The *brain*, indeed, is a thing so far distinct from the rest of the system, as that it may be but little affected by several disorders, under which the rest of the system may labour; as the *legs* may be sound while the *arms* are diseased, or rather as the *bones* may continue sound, while the *muscular flesh* is disordered, &c. In a case of this kind, where the brain is not itself immediately affected, as the thinking faculty depends upon the brain, it may be vigorous, when the rest of the body is very languid. But that the soul enters upon new scenes of action, without the help of the body in sleep, is destitute of any one fact.

or

or observation to support it. We are, according to all appearance, just as much fatigued with *thinking* as with *walking*; and to say, that it is the *body* only that is fatigued, in this case, and not the *mind itself*, is absolutely *gratis dictum*. There is just the same reason to conclude, that the *thinking powers* are exhausted, in the one case, as that the *walking powers* are exhausted in the other. That we think at all, in perfectly sound sleep, is by no means probable. On the contrary, according to appearances, the thinking powers are refreshed by rest in sleep, exactly as the muscular strength is recruited by the same means.

#### OBJECTION XIV. *From Absence of Mind.*

It is said by Mr. Baxter \*, That “ it is “ altogether inconsistent with the materiality “ of the thing that thinks in us, that we are “ sometimes so wholly occupied in the con- “ templation of some absent objects, or some “ purely ideal thing, that we are quite imper- “ cipient of objects round us, and which at “ present act upon our senses.” Among other instances, he afterwards †, mentions the constant *pressure of our own bodies*, occasioned by gravitation, whether we walk, sit, or lie.

But nothing is requisite to solve the difficulty in these cases, but the supposition, that whatever be the effect of any sensation or

\* *Essay on the Soul*, p. 428.

† P. 430.

idea

idea upon the brain, the impression may be so strong as to overpower all other impressions. This we know is actually the case with the *eye*. Let a man look attentively upon any very bright object, and immediately afterwards turn his eyes upon whatever other objects he pleases, and he either will not see them at all, or they will all appear to be of the same colour; so that, in this violent affection of the eye, fainter impressions are not sensibly perceived, though they cannot but be made upon the eye in those circumstances, as well as others. Now the *brain* is of the very same substance with the *retina*, and *optic nerves*; and therefore must be subject to a similar affection.

This writer explains these cases by supposing, that the mind “ *voluntarily* employs “ *itself*, while it is thus inattentive to things “ *present*, in the earnest consideration of some “ *things that are absent*.” But *volition* is not at all concerned in the case; for nothing can be more evident, than that this *absence of mind* is altogether an involuntary thing. It is not *choice* that either leads to it, or prolongs it; for this would imply, that the mind had been *aware* of other objects having solicited its attention, and that it had peremptorily refused to give any attention to them. Whereas, at the close of a reverie of this kind, the mind is always unconscious of any foreign objects having obtruded themselves upon it at all, just as in the case of sound sleep.

OBJECTION XV. *From the corruptibility of Matter.*

The greatest cause of that aversion which we feel to the supposition of the soul being material, is our apprehension, that it will then be liable to *corruption*, which we imagine it cannot be if it be immaterial. But, for any thing that we know, neither of these inferences are just, and, therefore, no advantage whatever is, in fact, gained by the modern hypothesis. All things material are not liable to corruption, if by corruption be meant *dissolution*, except in circumstances to which they are not naturally exposed. It is only very *compound bodies* that are properly liable to corruption, and only *vegetable* and *animal substances* ever become properly *putrid* and *offensive*, which is the real source of the objection.

It is possible, however, that even a human body may be wholly exempt from corruption, though those we have at present are not, as is evident from the account that the apostle Paul gives of the bodies with which we shall rise from the dead; when from *earthly*, they will become *spiritual*; from *corruptible*, *in-corruptible*; and from *mortal*, *immortal*.

Besides, how does it follow, that an immaterial substance cannot be liable to decay or dissolution, as well as a material one? In fact, all the reason that any person could ever have

have for imagining this, must have been that an immaterial substance, being, in all respects, the reverse of a material one, must be *incorruplicable*, because the former is *corruptible*. But till we know something *positive* concerning this supposed immaterial substance, and not merely its *not being matter*, it is impossible to pronounce whether it may not be liable to change, and be dissolved, as well as a material substance. Necessary *immutability*, is an attribute that cannot be demonstrated except of God only; and he who made all things, material or immaterial, may have subjected them to whatever laws he pleases, and may have made the one as much subject to change and decay as the other, for any thing that we know to the contrary: so that all our flattering notions of the *simplicity* and *incorruplicability* of immaterial substances are mere fancy and chimera, unsupported by any *evidence* whatever. The soul has been supposed to be necessarily incorruplicable, because it is *indivisible*, but that argument I presume was sufficiently answered, when it was shewn that ideas which have *parts*, as most of our ideas manifestly have, cannot exist in a soul that has *no parts*; so that the subject of thought in man cannot be that simple and *indivisible*, and consequently not that *indiscrepable* thing that it has been imagined to be.

## SECTION XI.

*The Objection from CONSCIOUSNESS more particularly considered.*

SINCE, in all metaphysical subjects, there is a perpetual appeal made to *consciousness*, or *internal feeling*; that is, to what we certainly and intuitively know by reflecting on what passes within our own minds, and I have hitherto contented myself with noticing the particular instances in which I apprehended some mistake has been made with respect to it, as they occurred in the course of my argument; I shall here give a more general view of the subject, in order to acquaint my reader what things they are that, I apprehend, we *can* be conscious of, and especially to caution him against confounding them with those things of which we are not properly conscious, but which we only *infer* from them.

When we shut our eyes on the external world, and contemplate what we find within ourselves, we first perceive the images, or the ideas of the objects by which our senses have been impressed. Of these we are properly conscious. They are what we immediately *observe*, and are not *deductions* from any prior observations.

In the next place, we know by intuition, or are conscious, that these ideas appear, and reappear,

appear, and that they are variously connected with each other, which is the foundation of *memory* or *recollection*. We also see, that our ideas are variously *combined* and *divided*, and can perceive the other relations that they bear to each other, which is the foundation of *judgment*, and consequently of *reasoning*. And lastly, we perceive, that various bodily motions depend upon ideas, and trains of ideas, from which arises, what is called a *voluntary power* over our actions.

These particulars, I apprehend, comprise all that we are properly conscious of; and with respect to these, it is hardly possible we can be mistaken. But every thing that we pretend to know, that is really more than these, must be by way of *inference* from them; and in drawing these inferences or conclusions, we are liable to mistakes, as well as in other inferences. In fact, there is, perhaps, no subject whatever with respect to which we have more need of caution, from the danger we are in of imagining, that our knowledge of things relating to ourselves is *in the first instance*, when, in reality, it is *in the second*, or perhaps the *third* or *fourth*.

If then, as I have observed, all that we are really conscious of be our *ideas*, and the various *affections* of our *ideas*, which, when reduced to general heads, we call the *powers of thought*, as *memory*, *judgment*, and *will*, all our knowledge of the *subject of thought* within us, or what we call *ourselves*, must be by way

of *inference*. What we *feel*, and what we *do*, we may be said to know by *intuition*; but what we *are*, we know only by *deduction*, or *inference* from *intuitive observations*. If, therefore, it be asserted, that the *subject* of *thought* is something that is *simple*, *indivisible*, *immaterial*, or *naturally immortal*, it can only be by way of *conclusion* from given *premises*. Consequently, it is a *decision* for which no man's word is to be taken. We may *fancy* that it is something that we *feel*, or are *conscious* of, but, from the *nature* of the thing, it can only be that a man *reasons* himself into that *belief*, and therefore he may, without having been aware of it, have imposed upon himself by some *fallacy* in the *argument*.

*Feeling* and *thinking* are allowed to be *properties*; and though all that we can know of any thing are its *properties*, we agree to say, that all *properties* inhere in, or belong to, some *subject* or *substance*; but what this *substance* *is*, farther than its being possessed of those very *properties* by which it is known to us, it is impossible for us to say, except we can prove, that those known *properties* necessarily imply others. If, therefore, any person say he is *conscious* that his *mind* (by which we mean the *subject* of *thought*) is *simple*, or *indivisible*, and if he speak properly, he can only mean, that he is *one thinking person*, or *being*, and not *several*, which will be universally acknowledged. But if he means any thing more than this, as that the *substance* to

to which the property of thinking belongs is incapable of division, either having no extension, or parts, or that those parts cannot be removed from each other, I do not admit his assertion, without hearing what *reasons* he has to advance for it; being sensible, that in this he goes beyond a proper consciousness. I may think it more probable, that every thing that exists must have extension, and that (except space, and the divine essence, which fills all space) whatever is extended may be divided, though that division might be attended with the loss of properties peculiar to the undivided substance.

Much farther must a man go beyond the bounds of proper *consciousness*, into those of *reasoning*, to say that the subject of his thinking powers is *immortal*, or something different from the matter of which his body, and especially his brain, consists. For admitting all that he can know by *experience*, or *intuition*, I may think it more probable, that all the powers or properties of man inhere in *one kind* of substance; and since we are agreed, that man consists, in part at least, of matter, I may conclude, that he is wholly material, and may refuse to give up this opinion, till I be shown, that the properties necessarily belonging to matter, and those of feeling and thinking, are incompatible. And before this can be determined, the *reasons for* and *against* it must be attended to. It is a question that cannot be decided by *simple feeling*.

Less still can it be determined by consciousness, that the subject of thought is naturally *immortal*, so that a man will continue to think and act after he has ceased to breathe and move. We are certainly conscious of the same things with respect to ourselves, but what one man may think to be very clear on this subject, another may think to be very doubtful, or exceedingly improbable; drawing different *conclusions* from the same premises.

Again, that man is an *agent*, meaning by it, that he has a power of *beginning motion*, independently of any mechanical laws to which the author of his nature has subjected him, is a thing that is so far from being evident from consciousness, that, if we attend properly to what we really do feel, we shall, as I conceive, be satisfied that we have no such power. What we really do feel, or may be sensible of, if we attend to our feelings, is, that we never come to any resolution, form any deliberate purpose, or determine upon any thing whatever, without some *motive*, arising from the state of our minds, and the ideas present to them; and, therefore, we ought to conclude that we have no power of resolving, or determining upon any thing, without some motive. Consequently, in the proper philosophical language, motives ought to be denominated the *causes* of all our *determinations*, and therefore of all our *actions*.

All that men generally mean by a *consciousness of freedom*, is a consciousness of their having a power to do what they previously will, or please. This is allowed, and that it is a thing of which we are properly conscious. But to will without a motive, or contrary to the influence of all motives presented to the mind, is a thing of which no man *can* be conscious. Nay, every just observation concerning ourselves, or others, appears to me very clearly to lead to the opposite conclusion, viz. that our *wills*, as well as our *judgments*, are determined by the *appearances of things* presented to us; and, therefore, that the determinations of both are equally guided by certain invariable *laws*; and, consequently, that every determination of the will, or judgment, is just what the being who made us subject to those laws, and who always had, and still has, the absolute disposal of us, must have intended that they should be. If, however, this conclusion be denied, it must be controverted by *argument*, and the question must not be decided by *consciousness*, or any pretended *feeling* of the contrary.

## SECTION

## SECTION XII.

*Of the Objection to the System of Materialism  
derived from the Consideration of the DIVINE  
ESSENCE.*

IT will be said, that if the principle of thought in *man* may be a property of a material substance, the *divine Being* himself may be material also; whereas, it is now almost universally believed to be the doctrine of revelation, that the *Deity* is, in the strictest sense of the word, an *immaterial substance*, incapable of local presence; though it will be shewn in its proper place, that the sacred writers say nothing about such a substance.

Considering how much this subject is above all human comprehension, it is no wonder that the most opposite opinions should have been maintained with respect to it. But this consideration, at the same time that it ought to check our boldness, ought, likewise, to have taught us mutual candour and indulgence.

I am fully aware how difficult it is to express myself with clearness on a subject so extremely obscure, and how hazardous it is to advance the very little that any man can say concerning it. But I shall not, on this account, decline speaking freely and fully to every difficulty that either has been urged against

against the system of the materiality of man, or that has occurred to myself with respect to it; and the objections which arise from the consideration of the divine essence, are of such particular consequence, that I shall treat of them in this separate section. I only beg those who are friends to freedom of thought, and inquiry, to attend to the few considerations that I shall offer on this very difficult subject.

In the first place, it must be confessed, with awful reverence, that we know but little of *ourselves*, and therefore much less of our *Maker*, even with respect to his *attributes*. We know but little of the *works* of God, and therefore certainly much less of his *essence*.

In fact, we have no proper idea of any *essence* whatever. Our ascribing impenetrability to matter might make us imagine, that we had some kind of idea of *its* substance, though this was fallacious; but now that, by a rigid attention to the phenomena, and a strict adherence to the laws of philosophizing, we have been obliged to deny that matter has any such property, but besides extension, merely *powers* of attraction and repulsion, it will hardly be pretended, that we have any proper idea of the substance even of matter, considered as divested of all its properties. The term substance, or essence, therefore, is, in fact, nothing more than a help to *expression*, as we may say, but not at all to *conception*.

We

We cannot speak of attraction or repulsion, for example, but as powers belonging to, and residing in some *thing*, *substance*, or *essence*, but our ideas do not go beyond these powers; and when we attempt to form any thing of an idea of the substance of matter, exclusive of the *powers* which it *has*, and exclusive of the *impenetrability* which it *has not*, all ideas vanish from the mind, and nothing, absolutely nothing, is left for an object of contemplation. If it be still called a *substance*, it is, however, as immaterial a one as any person can wish for. In reality, the term *immateriality* never did, or could suggest any idea whatever. That the term *substance* and *essence* are of no use but as modes of expression, is evident from our speaking of the *substance* or *essence of things*, as if they themselves were only properties.

If then our ideas concerning matter do not go beyond the powers of which it is possessed, much less can our ideas go beyond powers, properties, or attributes, with respect to the divine Being; and if we confine our definition of God to these, it is not possible that we can make any mistake, or suffer by our misconceptions. Now the powers and properties of the Divine mind, as clearly deduced from the works of God, are not only so infinitely superior to those of the human mind, when there is some analogy between them, but so essentially different from them in other respects, that whatever term we make use of to denote

denote the one, it must be improperly applied to the other.

In two circumstances that we do know, and probably in many others of which we have no knowledge at all, the human and divine nature, finite and infinite intelligence, most essentially differ. The first is, that our attention is necessarily confined to one thing, whereas he who made, and continually supports all things, must equally attend to all things at the same time; which is a most astonishing, but necessary attribute of the one supreme God, of which we can form no conception; and, consequently, in this respect, no finite mind, or nature, can be compared with the Divine.

Again, the Deity not only attends to every thing, but must be capable of either *producing*, or *annihilating* any thing. For since all that we know of bodies, are their powers, and the divine Being changes those powers at pleasure, it is evident, that he can take them all away, and consequently annihilate the very substance; for without powers, substance is nothing. And since he can communicate powers, it is evident, that he can produce substance. So that, in this respect also, as the Divine *powers*, so the Divine *nature* must be essentially different from ours; and, consequently, no common term, except such comprehensive terms as *being*, *nature*, &c. can be properly used to express them both.

Again,

Again, as the Divine nature has properties incompatible with all created and finite natures, so, though there must be some common property in all beings that have any action or influence upon one another, there is no evidence of the Divine nature being possessed of the properties of other substances, in such a manner as to be intitled to the same appellation. For example, the Divine essence cannot be the object of any of our senses, as every thing that we call *matter* is. For though the divine Being, in order to his *acting* every where, must *be* every where, we are not sensible of his presence by our sight, hearing, or feeling, &c.

There is, therefore, upon the whole, manifold reason to conclude, that the Divine nature, or essence, besides being simply unknown to us, as every nature or essence is, has properties most essentially different from every thing else; and, therefore, we shall certainly deceive ourselves, if we call things so different from one another by any common name.

Upon the whole, it is plain, that no proof of the materiality of man can be extended, by any just analogy, to a proof or evidence of a similar materiality of the Divine nature; for the properties or powers being different, the substance or essence (if it be any convenience to us to use such terms at all) must be different also.

If

If by the term *immaterial*, we simply mean to denote a substance, that has properties and powers essentially different from those of created matter, it is plain, that I have no objection to the term; and, in this sense, I do believe it is, in fact, used by the generality of mankind. But if, with modern metaphysicians, we intend to denote by it a substance, that has no property whatever in common with matter, and that even bears no relation to space, I must deny that any such substance exists; because, according to such a definition, the divine Being is necessarily cut off from all communication with, and all action or influence upon, his own creation.

But let us make use of what terms we please to express the Divine nature, or his mode of existence, we are not able to come any nearer to an adequate conception concerning them. God is, and ever must remain, the *incomprehensible*, the object of our most profound reverence, and awful adoration. Compared with him, all other beings are as *nothing, and less than nothing*. *He filleth all in all, and he is all in all.*

I would observe, however, and I think it but justice to those who may happen to see this subject in a different light from that in which I have here represented it, that should any person, on account of the very few circumstances in which the Divine nature resembles other natures, think proper to apply the

the term material to both, the hypothesis advanced in this treatise concerning the nature of matter which excludes impenetrability, or solidity from being a property of it ( by which, as we may say, the *reproach of matter* is wiped off) makes this to be a very different kind of materialism from that groffer sort, which, however, has been maintained by many pious christians, and was certainly the real belief of most of the early Fathers.

It is only on account of the notion that matter is necessarily *inert*, and absolutely incapable of intelligence, thought, or action, that it has been deemed dangerous to ascribe it either to a finite, or to the infinite mind ; but when this reproach is wiped away, the danger vanishes of course. It is the powers of supreme intelligence, omnipotence, unbounded goodness, and universal providence, that we reverence in the Deity ; and whatever be the essence to which we believe these powers belong, it must appear equally respectable to us, whether we call it material or immaterial ; because it is not the *substance*, of which we have no idea at all, but the *properties* that are the object of our contemplation and regard.

All that we can pretend to know of God, is his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. We see, and feel the effects and influence of these every monient of our lives ; but it is impossible we should see or feel the *substance* to which these powers belong ; and, there-

therefore, all that we can conceive, or pronounce concerning it, must be merely hypothetical ; and provided, that every person is fully satisfied that his own ideas of the Divine essence are consistent with the *known attributes of divinity*, they must necessarily be equally safe, and equally innocent. We are all agreed with respect to every thing that *concerns us*, viz. the *divine works*, and the *divine attributes* ; and we differ only with respect to an opinion which, circumstanced as this is, cannot possibly affect us.

It is said, that matter can only *be acted upon*, and is necessarily incapable of *acting*, or *beginning action*. This conclusion we have been led to form, by observing, that every motion in matter, with which we are acquainted, was preceded by some other motion ; which we therefore consider, and properly enough, as the *cause* of the subsequent motion. But, for the very same reason, we might conclude, that what we call *spirit*, or *mind*, is equally incapable of beginning action or motion ; because every idea, every thought, and every determination of the mind of man, is preceded, and, strictly speaking, *caused* by some other idea of the mind, or sensation of the body ; and, therefore, judging by what we know of ourselves, *mind* ought to be concluded to be as incapable of beginning motion as the *body* itself. As far as we know from experience, both are equally passive, the one being absolutely governed by intellectual laws,

and influences, and the other by corporeal ones.

Of the *beginning of motion, or action*, we must sit down with acknowledging, that we have, in reality, no conception at all, and the difficulty is by no means removed, or in the smallest degree lessened, by shifting it from *matter* to *mind*. Mr. Locke very justly observes \*, that “ it is as hard to conceive “ self-motion in a created immaterial, as in a “ created material being, consider it how we “ will.” And certainly the difficulty of our conception is not lessened by transferring it from a created to an uncreated being.

We know there must be a *first cause* of all things, because things do actually exist, and could never have existed without a cause, and all *secondary causes* necessarily lead us to a *primary one*. But of the nature of the *existence* of this primary cause, concerning which we know nothing but by its *effects*, we cannot have any conception. We are absolutely confounded, bewildered, and lost, when we attempt to speculate concerning it, and it is no wonder that this should be the case. We have no *data* to go upon, and no force of mind to support us in it. All we can say is, that this speculation, attended as it is, with insuperable difficulties, is attended with just the same, and no greater difficulty, on the idea of the mind being material or immaterial. And the system of materialism has unquestion-

\* Essay, vol. ii. p. 147.

ably

ably this advantage, that it is entirely free from another difficulty, viz. *how an immaterial substance can act upon matter*; a difficulty which, in my idea, amounts to an absolute *impossibility*, as those substances have hitherto been defined.

As to the difficulty arising from the divine material essence penetrating other matter, it has no place at all in the hypothesis advanced from Mr. Boscovich and Mr. Michell; and certainly this idea is much more consonant to the idea which the sacred writers give us of the omnipresence of the divine Being, and of his *filling all in all*, than that of a being who bears no relation to space, and therefore cannot properly be said to *exist any where*; which is the doctrine of the rigid immaterialists.

In the scriptures, the divine Being is said to be a *spirit*; but all that is there meant by spirit, is an *invisible power*. The divine works are visible and astonishing, but *himself no man has seen, or can see.*

That such an idea as many have, or affect to have, of the strict immateriality of the divine nature, as not existing in space, is not an idea of much importance, at least, may with certainty be concluded, from its not being suggested to us in the scriptures, and especially in the Old Testament. All that we are there taught concerning the nature of God, is, that he made all things, that he sees and knows all things, that he is present in all places, and that he superintends and governs

all things ; also, that he had no beginning, that he can have no end, and that he is incapable of any change. Farther than this we are not taught.

On the contrary, it appears to me, as will be seen in its proper place, that the idea which the scriptures give us of the divine nature, is that of a Being, properly speaking, *every where present*, constantly supporting, and, at pleasure, controling the laws of nature, but not the object of any of our senses ; and that, out of condescension, as it were, to the weakness of human apprehension, he chose, in the early ages of the world, to signify his peculiar presence by some *visible symbol*, as that of a supernatural bright cloud, or some other appearance, which could not but impress their minds with the idea of a real local presence. He is also generally represented as residing in the heavens, and from thence inspecting and governing the world, and especially the affairs of men. This, indeed, is not a philosophically *just*, but it is an *easy*, and a very *innocent* manner of conceiving concerning God.

It has been said, that, notwithstanding I decline the term, I virtually make the Deity to be a material being. But it will be found, by the candid and attentive, that I have not, in reality, any idea of the divine essence that is at all different from that of those philosophers and divines, who maintain the *proper omnipresence*, or *ubiquity* of the Divine Being, which

which necessarily implies a real extension, and that he has a power of acting upon matter.

I will take this opportunity of saying farther, that, upon no system whatever, is the great Author of Nature more distinct from his productions, or his presence with them, and agency upon them, more necessary. In fact, the system now held forth to the public, taken in its full extent, makes the Divine Being to be of as much importance in the system, as the apostle makes him, when he says, *In him we live, and move, and have our being.* The contemplation of it impresses the mind with sentiments of the deepest reverence and humility, and it inculcates a degree of devotedness to God, both active and passive, that no other philosophical system can inspire. Consequently, the obligation to all those virtues, that are more immediately derived from that great vital spring and principle of all virtue, *devotion*, those which give a superiority to the world, a fearless integrity, and a noble independence of mind in the practice of our duty, is more strongly felt, and therefore may be supposed to take a deeper root in the mind, than upon any other system whatever. In short, it is that philosophy which alone suits the doctrine of the *scriptures*, though the writers of them were not philosophers, but had an instruction infinitely superior to that of any philosophical school. Every other system of philosophy is discordant with the

scriptures, and, as far as it lays any hold upon the mind, tends to counteract their influence.

## SECTION XIII.

*Of the Connexion between Sensation and Organization.*

I HAVE been asked, whether I consider the powers of sensation and thought as *necessarily resulting* from the organization of the brain, or as something independent of organization, but *superadded* and *communicated* to the system afterwards; having expressed myself doubtfully, and perhaps variously on the subject\*.

I answer, that my idea now is, that sensation and thought do necessarily result from the organization of the brain, when the powers of mere *life* are given to the system. For I can easily conceive a perfect man to be formed without life, that is, without respiration, or the circulation of the blood, or whatever else it be in which life more properly

\* In the *Essay* prefixed to my edition of Hartley, I expressed myself with absolute uncertainty in this respect, "I rather think, that the whole man is of some uniform composition, and that the property of perception, as well as the other powers that are termed mental, is the result (whether necessary, or not) of such an organisical structure as that of the brain."

confists,

consists, and consequently without every thing necessarily depending upon life; but I cannot imagine that a human body, completely organized, and having life, would want sensation and thought. This I suppose to follow *of course*, as much as the circulation of the blood follows respiration.

As to the *manner* in which the power of perception results from organization and life, I own I have no idea at all; but the *fact* of this connexion does not appear to me to be, on that account, the less certain. Sensation and thought do always accompany such an organization; and having never known them to be separated, we have no reason to suppose that they *can* be separated. When, therefore, God had made man of the *dust of the earth*; nothing was wanting to make him all that he is, viz. a *living soul*, but simply the *breath of life*.

In all other cases we deem it sufficient to say, that certain circumstances are the causes, and the *necessary causes*, of certain appearances, if the appearances always accompany the circumstances. We are not, for example, in the least able to conceive how it is that a magnet attracts iron; but having observed, that it never fails to do it, we conclude that, though we do not see the *proximate cause*, or *how* the attraction is effected, the magnet nevertheless *has* that power, and must cease to be a magnet before it can lose it; so that our reasoning with respect to the result of sensation from

organization is exactly similar to our reasoning concerning the attraction of iron by magnetism.

Also, for the very same reason, that it is said, that it is not the organized body that feels and thinks, but an *immaterial substance* residing in the body, and that will remain when the body is destroyed, we might say, that it is not the material magnet that attracts, but a peculiar immaterial substance within it, that produces the effect, and that will remain when the material magnet is destroyed. And, for the same reason, we may imagine *distinct immaterial substances* for every operation in nature, the proximate cause of which we are not able to perceive.

The manner in which the association of ideas is formed, or in which motives influence the mind, was equally unknown; but the association of ideas was, nevertheless, known to be a *fact*, and the influence of motives was not, on that account, denied. But now, that Dr. Hartley has shewn us what ideas probably are, we see much farther into the *mechanism of the mind*. We see *how* one idea is connected with another, and *the manner* in which motives (which are only trains of ideas) produce their effect. Now, we are not more (or not much more) ignorant how sensation results from organization, than we were how the motion of the hand results from a volition, or how a volition is produced by a motive, which are now no longer such very difficult

difficult problems. It is not impossible, but, that in time we may see *how* it is that sensation results from organization.

## SECTION XIV.

*Of the Principles of HUMAN NATURE according to the Scriptures.*

HAD man consisted of *two parts*, so essentially different from each other as *matter* and *spirit* are now represented to be, and had the immaterial been the principal part, and the material system only subservient to it, it might have been expected that there would have been some express mention of it, or declaration concerning it (this being a thing of so much consequence to us) in the *scriptures*, which contain the history of the creation, mortality, and resurrection of man. And yet there is not only a most remarkable silence on the subject of the immateriality of the human soul in these sacred books, even where we should most naturally have expected some account of it, but many things are there advanced, which unavoidably lead us to form a different conclusion; and nothing can be found in those books to countenance the vulgar opinion, except a few passages ill translated, or ill understood, standing in manifest contradiction to the uniform tenor of the rest.

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The history of the creation of man is succinctly delivered in Gen. ii. 7. *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.* We see here, that the *whole man* (for nothing is said of his *body* in particular) was made of the dust of the ground. No part of him is said to have had a higher or different original; and surely so very important a circumstance as that of an *immaterial principle*, which could not be from the *dust*, would not have been omitted, if there had been any such thing in the composition.

When the whole man was completely formed, and not before, we are next informed, that God made this man, who was *lifeless* at first, to *breathe* and *live*. For it evidently follows from the text, that nothing but the circumstance of *breathing*, made the difference between the *unanimated earth*, and the *living soul*. It is not said that when one constituent part of the man was made, another necessary constituent part, of a very different nature, was superadded to it; and that these two, united, constituted the man; but only that that substance which was formed of the *dust of the earth* became a *living soul*, that is, became *alive*, by being made to *breathe*.

That no stress is to be laid upon the word *ψυχή*, which we translate *soul* (though it would be most of all absurd to suppose, as we must have done, from a fair construction of this passage,

passage, that the *dust of the earth* could be converted into an *immaterial soul*) is evident from the use of the same term in other places, in which it is used as synonymous to *man, the whole man*, and in some manifestly signifies nothing more than the *corporeal, or mortal part of man*.

Gen. xlvi. 26. *All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins.* The immaterial principle certainly could not come from his loins.

Exod. xviii. 4. *The soul that sinneth it shall die.* Ez. xiii. 19. *To slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls that should not live.* Ps. vii. 1, 2. *Save me, lest he tear my soul, rending it in pieces.* In all these passages, it is most evident, that the word *soul* is synonymous to *man*, and that it refers more immediately to his *body*; so that by *man becoming a living soul*, nothing can be understood besides his being *made alive*; and the passage suggests no hint of any thing but the property of *life* being superadded to that corporeal system which was entirely formed of the dust of the earth, in order to make a complete living man.

Sometimes the word that is here rendered *soul*, is used to express the *dead body* itself, and is so translated by us; as Lev. xxi. 1. 11. *There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people, neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for father or mother.* Ib. xix. 28. *Ye shall not make any cuttings in your*

*your flesh for the dead.* Numb. xix. 13. *Whoever touches the dead body of any man that is dead.* In this passage the periphrasis is very remarkable; and if, in this passage, the word ψυχή should be rendered *soul*, it must be translated thus, *Whosoever touches the dead soul of a man who shall die.* See also Hagg. ii. 13.

In other passages, where the same word is by us rendered *soul*, there would have been much more propriety in translating it *life*, which does not denote a *substance*, but a *property*.

Ps. lxxxix. 48. *Who can deliver his soul [life] from the hand of the grave.* Job xxxiii. 30. *To bring back his soul [life] from the pit.* Gen. xxxv. 18. *And it came to pass as her soul, [her life] was departing, for she died.* 1 Kings xvii. 22. *And the soul [the life] of the child came to him again.*

The same observation may be made with respect to the corresponding word in the Greek, ψυχή, in the New Testament; as in Luke xii. 20. *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul [thy life] be required of thee; that is, this night thou shalt die.*

Besides, whatever principles we may be led to ascribe to *man* from this account of his formation in Gen. ii. 7. the very same we ought to ascribe to the *brutes*; because the very same words are used in the account of them by the same writer, both in the Hebrew and in the Septuagint, though they are differently rendered in our translation. For Gen. i. 24, we read,

read, *And God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature* [נַפְשׁ חַיָּה] [living soul] *and again, Gen. ii. 19. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature* [living soul] *that was the name thereof.* For this observation I am indebted to an ingenious and worthy friend, and I think it valuable and decisive in the case.

Let us now proceed to the account which the scriptures give us of the *mortality of man*, to see whether we can find in any passage relating to this subject some trace of an immortal soul.

Death is first threatened to man in these terms, Gen. ii. 17. *Of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt surely die.* Here is no exception made of any part of the man that was not to die. The natural construction of the sentence imports, that whenever the decree should take place, whatever was alive belonging to man would wholly cease to live, and become *lifeless earth*, as it had been originally.

The same inference may be made from the account of the actual *sentence of death* passed upon Adam, after his transgression. Gen. iii. 19. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken. For dust thou [not thy body only] art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* If, in this, there be any allusion to an immaterial and immortal part in man, it is wonderfully concealed; for nothing appears, upon the

the face of the passage, but that, as the *whole man* had been *lifeless earth*, he would become lifeless earth again. Every other construction is an express contradiction both to the words, and the spirit of the sentence. For what would have signified the death of the *body*, to Adam, if there still remained an *inextinguishable principle of life?* and especially if, as the immaterialists in general suppose, he would afterwards have enjoyed a *better life* than he could have had in conjunction with the body; which could only be a clog to it, and obstruct its exercise and enjoyment.

Besides, according to the common hypothesis, all the punishment that is mentioned in this sentence, is inflicted upon the mere *passive instrument* of the soul, whilst the *real criminal* was suffered to escape.

In general, to interpret what the scriptures say of the *mortality of man*, which is the uniform language, both of the Old and New Testament on this subject, of the *mortality of the body only*, which is a part of the man that is of the least value, and wholly insignificant, when compared with the other part of his constitution, *the mind*, is exactly of a piece with the Trinitarian interpretation of those passages in the gospels, which represent Christ as *inferior to his Father*, of his *human nature only*; supposing the evangelists to have neglected the consideration of his *superior divine nature*; though, if there had been any such thing, it was more especially requisite, that it

it should have been particularly attended to in those very passages.

When the wickedness of men was so great, that God was resolved to destroy them from the face of the earth by a flood, he says, Gen. vi. 3. *My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh* (רְשָׁב). Here is no mention of any other superior principle.

When this flood took place, and almost the whole race of mankind was destroyed by it, there is still no mention made of their immaterial souls, or what became of them. We only read, Gen. vii. 22. *All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was on the dry land died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowls of heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth.*

Another occasion on which we might naturally expect some account of the immaterial principle in man, if there had been any such thing, is where an account is given of the *deaths of remarkable persons*. And yet, though we have, in the scriptures, very circumstantial accounts of the deaths of several eminent persons, with respect to none of them is there the least hint dropped, that the *body only* was dead, but, that the *immortal soul* was altogether unaffected by what had happened to its gross companion. This sentiment, which is capable of a vast variety of expression, never fails

fails to occur upon similar occasions with us ; and, for the same reasons, could not have failed to occur to the sacred writers, if they had had any idea of such a thing.

Particular mention is made of the deaths of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Aaron, Moses, David, and many others ; but all that is said upon any of these occasions, is either that the dying person was *gathered to his people*, or that he *slept with his fathers*. Now, certainly *sleep* does not give us the idea of a person's being *alive*, and *active*, and especially of his entering upon a *new mode of being*, in which he should be more alive, more active, and more vigorous, than he had ever been before.

In the account of the death of Joseph, it is said, Gen. 1. 26. *They embalmed him, and he was put into a coffin in Egypt.* It is not said, that there was any part of him that was *not embalmed*, and that could not be put into a coffin. Our different notions dictate a very different language. Upon our grave-stones we never see inscribed, *Here lies such a person*, but always, *here lies the body, or the remains, or what was mortal* of such a person. Such an influence have *ideas* upon *language* and *customs* ; and the same would they have had upon the language and customs of those ancient times, if the ideas and notions had then existed.

We have accounts in the scriptures of several persons having been recalled from death, and having come to life again ; as of the dead

dead man, who was raised to life by the touch of the prophet's bones, of two children by Elijah and Elisha; of Jairus's daughter, the young man at Nain, and of Lazarus by our Saviour; of other persons by the apostles, and more especially of the death and resurrection of our Lord himself. Yet, upon none of these occasions, is there the least mention made of the *immaterial soul*, which, upon the common hypothesis, must have been in a state of happiness, or misery, and have been recalled from thence to its old habitation. This looks as if, in the apprehension of the sacred writers, there was no such a thing as a separate soul to be recalled; but that on the contrary, the case was simply this, viz. that the *life*, which is no more than a *property*, had been lost, and was restored again. This too would be considered as an *advantage*; whereas it has the appearance of cruelty and injustice, in the case of a good man, as of Lazarus, who had been dead four days, to recall him from a state of unmixed happiness, to the troubles and miseries of this life, and subject him, once more, to the pains of death.

If there be an immaterial soul in man, and especially if the body be a clog to its operations and enjoyments, it was no favour to Enoch or Elijah to remove them to another life, with such an incumbrance; and the general resurrection, as I have observed before, which we are taught to regard as *the great object*.

*object of christian hope*, is not merely *superfluous*, but even *undesirable*; since virtue would naturally have had a much more complete reward without the body.

It is so evidently the doctrine of the scriptures, that the state of retribution does not take place till after the general resurrection, that it is now adopted by great numbers, who, nevertheless, cannot be brought to give up the notion of an immaterial soul. But I wish they would consider, what notion they really have of an immaterial soul passing thousands of years without a single idea or sensation. In my opinion, it approaches very nearly to its being *no substance at all*; just as matter must intirely vanish, when we take away its property of *extension*.

If, together with the opinion of the intire cessation of thought, they will maintain the real *existence* of the soul, it must be for the sake of the *hypothesis* only, and for no real *use* whatever. They who maintain that, without a resurrection, there is a sufficient reward for virtue, and a state of punishment for vice, taking place immediately after death, have a *solid reason* for contending for an immaterial principle, unaffected by the catastrophe to which the body is subject. But I can see no reason in the world why any *christian*, who, as such, necessarily believes the doctrine of a resurrection (this being the proper fundamental article of his faith) should be so zealous for it; and, indeed, why he should

should not be rather *jealous* of such a notion, as interfering with his *proper system*, superseding it, and making it *superfluous*, and really *undesirable*. The doctrine of a separate soul most evidently embarrasses the true christian system, which takes no sort of notice of it, and is uniform and consistent without it. In the scriptures, the heathens are represented to be *without hope*, and all mankind as *perishing* at death, if there be no *resurrection of the dead*.

Persons who attend to the scriptures cannot avoid concluding, that the *operations* of the soul depend upon the body; and that between death and the resurrection there will be a *suspension* of all its powers. And it is obvious to remark, that if this be the fact, there must be a sufficient *natural reason* why it should be so; and, therefore, there is fair ground to presume, that the soul cannot be that *independent being* that has been imagined.

According to the christian system, the body is necessary to all the *perceptions* and *exertions* of the mind: and if this be the case, what *evidence* can there be, that the mind is not dependent upon the body for its *existence* also? that is, what evidence can there be, that the faculty of thinking does not inhere in the body itself, and that there is no such thing as a *soul* separate from it? A philosopher, on seeing these appearances, would more naturally conclude, that the body appeared to have greater powers than he imagined it could

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have had, than that an immaterial spirit could be so necessarily dependant upon a gross body, as not to be able to perceive or think without it. This appears to me, on the first face of things, to be by much the more natural conclusion, exclusive of the obligation that all philosophers are under, not to admit more causes than are absolutely *necessary*.

But the most extraordinary assertion, that I have yet met with, relating to the subject, is, that the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is necessary to be established, before any regard can be paid to the scripture doctrine of a resurrection. For it is said, " that " if the soul be not naturally capable of sur- " viving the body, or if death is unavoid- " ably its *destruction*, then the resurrection " must be the resurrection of what was *not* " *in being*, the resurrection of *nothing*." It is true, that a *property*, such as I consider the *power of thinking* to be, cannot exist without its *substance*, which is an organized system. But if this property of thinking necessarily attends the property of *life*, nothing can be requisite to the restoration of all the powers of the man, but the restoration of the body, (no particle of which can be lost) to a state of life.

If we search the scriptures for passages more particularly expressive of the *state of man at death*, we find in them not only no trace of *sense*, *thought*, or *enjoyment*, but, on the contrary, such declarations as expressly exclude

exclude it; as Ps. vi. 5. *In death there is no remembrance of thee. In the grave who shall give thee thanks?* spoken by David when he was praying for recovery from sickness. Ps. cxv. 47. *The dead praise not the Lord, neither they that go down into silence;* and Ps. cxvi. 4. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to the earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.*

Job, speaking of man as utterly insensible in death, expresses himself so very fully and distinctly, that it is not possible to mistake his meaning. Job, xiv. 7. *There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away, yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up, so man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more. They shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.*

Nothing can be more evident, than that Job considered man as altogether insensible in death, and that he had no notion of his *body* being one thing, and *himself*, the *sentient principle*, another. But I cannot help concluding, that in the verses immediately following those quoted above, he expresses his belief of a re-

surrection to a future life. V. 13. *O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret until thy wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me. If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait [in the grave, as it seems to me] till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands.*

It is still more evident, from that celebrated passage in the 19th chapter of this book, that all the hope that Job had of a future life, was founded on his belief of a *resurrection*, and not on a state of *separation from the body*, of which he does not appear to have had any idea.

Job xix. 25. *I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.*

Solomon evidently considers the whole of man as equally mortal with brutes. After having said, Ecc. iii. 17. *God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose, and for every work;* he adds, v. 18. *I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which besalleth the*

*the sons of men befall eth beasts; even one thing befall eth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other. Yea they have all one breath. So that a man has no pre-eminence over a beast; for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are of the dust, and all return to dust again.*

Some consider this passage as put into the mouth of a person who objects against religion, or as an objection which had occurred to the writer himself; but I see no appearance of any such thing; and the doctrine is perfectly agreeable to the uniform tenor of the scriptures. After the passage quoted above, he adds, *Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?* But if this passage be interpreted in a sense consistent with what goes before, it can only mean that, notwithstanding the difference in the *form* and *posture* of a man and a beast; in consequence of which the *breath* of man goes *upwards*, and that of a beast goes *downwards*, there is no difference between them when they die. Accordingly, in the very next verse, he says, of man, *Who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?* evidently considering him as in a state of insensibility and perfect ignorance. Besides, *upwards* and *downwards* in this place, may not relate to the *breath*, or any thing represented by the *breath*, but to the *posture of the body in walking*, man walking with his head upwards, and the beast with his head looking downwards.

This writer, indeed, speaking of death, uses this expression, Ecc. xii. 7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* But, as it is contrary to the whole tenor of the scriptures, to suppose that the souls of departed men are in heaven, *with God, and Christ,* where they are said not to be till after the resurrection, the meaning of this passage can only be, that God, who gave *life,* will take it away; the word *spirit* denoting nothing more than *breath, or life.* By the same kind of figure, *our lives* are said, Coll. iii. 3. after death, to be *hid with Christ in God,* and that *when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory.* From which it is evident, that, notwithstanding the *lives* of good men are, figuratively speaking, said to be *with God,* they are not to *appear,* or be manifested, till the appearance, or second coming of Christ; so that the *spirit, or life, going to God, and remaining with him,* does not imply any state of perception, or enjoyment.

Our Saviour, indeed, seems to use the term *soul* as expressive of something distinct from the body, but, if he did (which, however, is not certain) he might do it in compliance with the prevailing opinion of the times; in the same manner as he applies the term *possessed of dæmons, to madmen,* and even speaks to madmen, as if they were actuated by evil spirits, though he certainly did not believe the

the existence of such dæmons. He says, however, Matt. x. 28. *Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

But when we consider that, according to the uniform tenor of the scriptures, and especially our Saviour's own discourses and parables, there is no punishment in hell till after the resurrection, it will be evident, that his meaning could only be, that men have power over us only in *this life*, but God in *the life to come*; meaning by the *soul*, the *life*, and in this place, the *future and better life* of man in opposition to the *present*. Also, when the apostle Paul, 1 Thess. v. 23. says, *I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, he only uses these terms as denoting, in the philosophy of his time (which had spread even among the Jews) all that constituted a *complete man*, without hinting at the possibility of any *separation* of the several parts.

Had the sacred writers really believed the existence of the soul, as a principle in the human constitution, naturally distinct from, and independent of the body, it cannot but be supposed, that they would have made some use of it in their arguments for a future life. But it is remarkable, that we find no such argument in all the New Testament.

St. Paul, though he writes largely upon the subject, and to Greeks, by whom the doctrines of

of Plato were respected, lays the whole stress of his argument upon *the promise of God by Jesus Christ*, confirmed to us by his resurrection from the dead. According to him, who must certainly be allowed to have understood christianity, and who would not slightly undervalue any proper support of its doctrines, *if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain*, and *they who are asleep in Christ*, that is, they who have died in the profession of christianity, *are perished*. But how could they have been said to have *perished*, or how could he conclude, as he does, that upon the supposition of there being no resurrection of the dead, we may safely neglect all the duties of morality, adopting the Epicurean maxim, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*, if the soul survive the body, enjoying all its thinking faculties, and consequently be the proper subject of moral retribution? Indeed, what occasion could there be for a resurrection, or general judgment, upon that hypothesis?

Two passages in the book of Revelation may also be interpreted in a manner equally favourable to this doctrine. We read, Rev. vi. 9, &c. *I saw the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, &c.* But it is not uncommon for the sacred writers to personify things without life. We also read, chap. xx. 4. *I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, &c. and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* But the rest of the dead lived

not

*not again till the thousand years were ended.* It is plain, therefore, that he saw them not as *unembodied souls*, but as *living men*, after a real resurrection, and, therefore, he did not see the rest of the dead souls at all; for being *dead*, they had no *souls* or *lives*.

I shall conclude this section with some observations of Mr. Hallet; “ Hence we see “ why the scriptures never speak of the *im-  
mortality of the soul*, as many divines have “ done. Tillotson takes notice of the fact, “ and wonders at it. The reason that he “ assigns for the silence of the scriptures on “ this head is, that the doctrine of the na- “ tural immortality of the soul is taught so “ plainly by the light of nature, that every “ man’s reason can easily discover it, and so “ a revelation needs not mention, but might “ take it for granted. Whereas, it now ap- “ pears, that the true reason why the scrip- “ tures do not teach it, is because it is not “ true \*.”

With respect to the importance of the opinion, he says, “ It is of no consequence in the “ world to any purpose of religion, whether “ the soul of man be material or immaterial. “ All that religion is concerned to do, is to “ prove that that which now thinks in us “ shall continue to think, and to be capable “ of happiness or misery for ever. This reli- “ gion proves from the express promises and “ threatenings of the gospel. But religion

\* Discourses, vol. i. p. 277.

“ is

“ is not concerned to determine of what *nature* this thinking immortal substance is.  
“ For my part, I judge it to be immaterial ;  
“ but if a man should think that the soul is  
“ mere matter, endowed with the power of  
“ thought, he would not overturn any article  
“ in religion, that is of the least consequence  
“ to promote the *ends* of religion. For while  
“ a man thinks that his soul is matter, he ne-  
“ cessarily thinks that God, who made mat-  
“ ter capable of thinking, and endowed the  
“ matter of his soul in particular with the  
“ power of thought, is capable, by the same  
“ almighty power, of preserving the matter  
“ of his soul capable of thinking for ever.  
“ And when he shall have proved, that it is  
“ the *will of God*, that that thing which now  
“ thinks in him shall continue to think for  
“ ever, he has proved the immortality of the  
“ soul, even upon his supposition of its being  
“ material, in the only way in which we who  
“ apprehend it to be immaterial are capable  
“ of proving its *actual immortality*. For this  
“ can only be proved by shewing, that it is  
“ the will of God that it shall be immortal\*.”

To what is advanced in this section, I beg my reader to add what is observed in the third volume of my *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, concerning the doctrine of an *intermediate state*; every argument against this doctrine tending to prove that there is no *separate soul* in man, but that his percipient and

\* Hallet's Discourses, p. 214.

thinking

thinking powers are nothing more than the necessary result of the *life* of the body

## SECTION XV.

*Of the DIVINE ESSENCE, according to the  
Scriptures.*

HAD the Deity been an immaterial substance, in the modern strict metaphysical sense of the word (for in the common sense of it, as signifying a being that has properties and powers, not only infinitely *superior* to, but most essentially *different* from, every thing that we call *matter*, it has been seen that I do not object to it) and had this idea of God been of real consequence, either to his own honour, or to the virtue and happiness of mankind, it might have been expected that it would have been strongly and frequently inculcated in the scriptures, as we find the doctrine of the *unity of his nature*, of his almighty *power*, his perfect *knowledge*, and his unbounded *goodness* to be. But if we look into the scriptures, we find a very striking difference in this case.

The scriptures abound with the strongest assertions, and the most solemn declarations concerning the unity of God, and concerning his power, wisdom, and goodness; but though we find in them that his attributes are displayed every where, and that nothing can confine their

opera-

operations, we meet with nothing at all determinate with respect to the *divine essence*. Nay, till we come to the times of David, and the later prophets, the Divine Being is represented in such a manner, that we can hardly help imagining, that the patriarchs must have conceived of him as a being of some unknown form, though surrounded by an insupportable splendour, so as to be invisible to mortal eyes.

Now, had even this opinion been a *dangerous one* (though it is not philosophically just) there would certainly have been something said to guard us against it, and prevent our entertaining a notion so dishonourable to God, and so injurious to ourselves. But it is remarkable, that nothing of this kind does occur.

We often find the *presence of the Lord* mentioned, as if there was upon earth some place where he particularly *resided*, or which he *frequented*. One instance of this we have in the Antediluvian history. Cain says, Gen. iv. 14. *Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid.* Again, v. 16. *And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.*

At the building of the tower of Babel, we read, Gen. xi. 5. *And God came down to see the city, and the tower which the children of men builded.* This is an expression which I can hardly think would have been used by David or Isaiah, who represent the Divine Being with much more dignity, as *sitting on the*

the circle of the heavens, and from thence beholding all the inhabitants of the earth. But the other representation is more adapted, as we may say, to the infantile state of the world.

To Moses God seems to have appeared in the symbol of a *dense bright cloud*; but his first appearance to him in the bush, was in a *flame of fire*. It is said, Exod. iii. 4. *that the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush.* But it appears from the conversation afterwards, that it was no angel, but *God himself*, who spake to him; the fire being, perhaps, called the *angel of God*, because it was the emblem of his presence, or was that by which he chose to manifest himself. For it is said, v. 4. *And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, &c.* When Moses asked his name, he says, **I AM THAT I AM**, a name peculiarly characteristic of the true God, denoting, as is generally thought, his *necessary existence*.

The visible appearance which represented the divine presence to the Israelites, in the wilderness, was a *cloud* by day, and *fire* by night, Ex. xiii. 21. *And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light.* Through this pillar it is said,

v. 24. that the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians, and troubled them.

But, in general, the Divine Being appeared unto Moses in a dense bright cloud, Ex. xix. 9. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may believe thee for ever.*

After the history of the golden calf, there is another account of an appearance of God to Moses, and many others with him, which has something in it very peculiar. Ex. xxiv. 9. *Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness; and upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; and they saw God, and did eat and drink.* Whether this was only the same appearance of a bright cloud, or of fire, from which the Divine Being had before spoken to Moses, or something farther, does not distinctly appear. In the Septuagint it is only said, and *they saw the place where the God of Israel stood*; and it appears from Maimonides\*, that the more intelligent Jews did not consider this, or any other similar passage, as importing that God had any form, or was really the *object of sight*; but only some symbol of the more immediate presence of God.

\* See his *More Nevochim*

It should seem that Moses imagined there was some other more *proper form of God* concealed within the cloud, from which he had usually spoken to him: for he expresses an earnest wish to have a nearer view of the majesty of God. Immediately after it is said, Exod. xxxiii. 11. that *the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend*; we are informed, v. 18. that he desired that God would *shew him his glory*. In answer to which, it is said, v. 20. *Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock, and it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen.*

If our modern metaphysicians would attend a little to such passages of scripture as these, and consider what must have been the sentiments of the writers, and of those who were present at the scenes described in them (though I readily acknowledge that such representations as these were used by way of accommodation to the low and imperfect conceptions of the Jews, or the passages may admit an interpretation different from the literal sense of them) they would not be so much alarmed as they now are, or affect to be, at every thing like *materiality* ascribed even to the Di-

vine Being ; and much less to human minds. It is the *attributes*, the *powers*, and the *character* of the Deity that alone concerns us, and not his *essence*, or *substance*.

The circumstances which attended the giving of the law, which were very awful, and calculated to impress the mind in the strongest manner, could not leave upon it the idea of an *immaterial being*, but of a being capable of local presence, though of no known form. Exod. xix. 16. *And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof descended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount, and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up.*

Again, it is not said that an *angel*, but that *God himself* spake all the words of the ten commandments. Exod. xx. 1. *And God spake all these words, saying; I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out*

*out of the house of bondage, &c.* The two tables of stone, containing the same commandments, are also said to have been written with the finger of God. Exod. xxxi. 18.

An audible voice is certainly calculated to give us the idea of a locally present being, and this is frequently represented as proceeding immediately from God, when he reveals his will to the prophets. It was not only to Moses that he thus spake *face to face*, but to Samuel when he was a child. 1 Sam. iii. 4. *And the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, Here am I.*

In the New Testament, also, an audible voice proceeded three several times from the Divine Majesty, to bear testimony to the mission of Christ. The first time at his baptism, Matt. iii. 17. *And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Again, on the mount of transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 5. *Behold a white cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice from the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; Hear ye him.* And lastly, in the temple, in the week of crucifixion. John xii. 28. *Jesus says, Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*

The Israelites justly considered the true God as standing in a peculiar relation to themselves, and as the Divine Being had promised to *dwell among them*, it was natural for them to take it

in too literal a sense. Exod. xxix. 45. *And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God, and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God.* On this account, Jonah might imagine, that he could flee from the presence of God by leaving the land of Canaan, in which he dwelt. Jonah i. 3. *And Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord.* But the subsequent events in the history of that prophet convinced him, that God was equally present in all places.

*Seeing God, in vision, is by no means uncommon with the ancient prophets.* If. vi. 1. *In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord [אֱלֹהִים] sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple, &c.* Then said I, *Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts.* Then flew one of the seraphims unto me—and said unto me, *Lo, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.* And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, *Whom shall I send, and who will go for us.* Then said I, *Here am I, send me.*

Micaiah says, 1 Kings xxiii. 19. *I saw the Lord [יְהוָה] sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, &c.*

Dan.

Dan. vii. 9. *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was as white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: His throne was like a fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued out, and came forth from before him. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousands stood before him—I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, &c.*

Amos ix. 1. *I saw the Lord [אָדָם] standing upon the altar, and he said, &c.*

Heb. iii. 2. *O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid—God came from Teman, and the holy one from mount Paran. His glory covered the Heavens, and the earth was full of his praise, and his brightness was as the light. He had horns (or bright beams, as it is rendered in the margin) coming out of his hands—He stood and measured the earth.*

This language is not unknown to the New Testament. Rev. iv. 2. *Immediately I was in the spirit; and behold, a throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the throne; and he that sat was, to look upon, like a jasper, and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald—And the four living creatures rest not day or night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. And when those living creatures give glory, and honour*

and thanks, to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne; saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they were and are created.

Many passages in the books of scripture, and especially in the Psalms, give us the most exalted ideas of the universal power and presence of God. But still this is so far from suggesting the idea of proper immateriality, which bears no relation to space, that they naturally give us the idea of a Being that is locally present every where, but invisible, and penetrating all things.

Solomon says, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings viii. 27. *But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have built.* If. lxvi. 1. *Thus saith the Lord, The Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool. Where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest?* Jer. xxiii. 23. *Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any bide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Do I not fill Heaven and earth, says the Lord?* To the same purpose is that sublime passage in Psalm cxxxix. 7. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither*

ther shall I flee from thy presence. If I ascend up into heaven thou art there. If I make my bed in the grave, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thine hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

Job says, ch. xxiii. 3. *Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat. Behold I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him. He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.*

When the Divine Being is expressly said to be *invisible*, no words are ever added to suggest to us, that it is because he is *immaterial*; but we are rather given to understand, that we cannot see God on account of the *splendour* that surrounds him. This will be seen in some of the passages quoted above; and the idea suits very well with the following passage of St. Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 15. *The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen.* The apostle John also says, John i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time; but he says nothing of the reason of it.*

When our Saviour says, John iv. 24. *God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; there is no*

reference whatever to the *immateriality* of the divine nature, but only to his *intelligence*, and *moral perfections*; and, therefore, requiring *truth in the inward part*, or a *spiritual*, as opposed to a *corporeal homage*; and this very passage is alledged, by some of the Fathers, as an argument for the *corporeity* of the divine nature.

When the Divine Being compares himself with *idols*, which is frequent in *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and other prophets, on which occasion they are said to be *wood and stone*, incapable of *motion*, *knowledge*, or *sense*, it is never said, by way of contrast, as might naturally be expected in this connexion, that the true God is altogether *immaterial*, and incapable of local presence. On the contrary, we find nothing on these occasions but declarations concerning the divine *power* and *knowledge*, especially with respect to *future events*, on which subject the true God more especially challenges the false ones.

I think I may conclude this section with observing, that our modern metaphysical notions, concerning the strict immateriality of the Divine Being, were certainly not drawn from the scriptures. In those sacred books we read of nothing but the infinite *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness* of God; and to impress our minds with the more awful ideas of him, he is generally represented as residing in heaven, and surrounded with a splendor, through which no mortal eye can pierce. But he is

so far from being said to be what we now call immaterial, that every description of him, even in the New Testament, gives us an idea of something *filling*, and *penetrating all things*, and therefore of no form, or known mode of existence..

For my part, I do not see how this notion of immateriality, in the strict metaphysical sense of the word, is at all calculated to heighten our veneration for the Divine Being. And though, as is no wonder, we are utterly confounded when we attempt to form any conception of a being properly *pervading*, and *supporting all things*, we are still more confounded when we endeavour to conceive of a being that has *no extension*, *no common property with matter*, and *no relation to space*. Also, by the help of these principles, which I have been endeavouring to establish, we get rid of two difficulties, which appear to me to be absolutely insuperable upon the common hypothesis, viz. how an immaterial being, not existing in space, can *create*, or *act upon*, matter; when, according to the definition of the terms, they are absolutely incapable of bearing any relation to each other.

## SECTION XVI.

Of the Arguments for the BEING and PERFECTIONS of GOD, on the System of Materialism.

NOTWITHSTANDING the opinion of the materiality of man has, in reality, nothing at all to do with the doctrine concerning God, yet as it has often been charged with leading to Atheism, I shall shew, in this section, that our practical knowledge of God stands independent of any conception whatever concerning even the *divine essence*; from whence it will clearly follow, *a fortiori*, that it must certainly be altogether independent of any opinion concerning *human nature*.

The arguments for the being and attributes of a God stand precisely upon the same footing on the system of materiality or immateriality. Considering, however, the prejudices that may arise on this subject, it may not be amiss to review some of the arguments, as laid down in my *Institutes of Natural Religion*, where I made such a distribution of the subject, as I hope will make the discussion of it more easy than it had been before.

By a God, I mean an *intelligent first cause*. This being proved, I consider what other properties

perties or attributes are necessarily connected with the idea of a first cause, and afterwards those which the examination of the works of God leads us to ascribe to him. Lastly, the divine goodness being the only *moral quality* that we directly discover, I consider how it is necessarily branched out into the different modifications of *justice, mercy, veracity, &c.*

In the proof of an intelligent cause of all things, it is impossible, that the consideration of the *divine essence* can be at all concerned. For the same reason that the *table* on which I write, or the *watch* that lies before me, must have had a maker, *myself*, and the *world* I live in must have had a maker too: and a *design, a fitness of parts to each other, and to an end*, are no less obvious in the one case than in the other. I have, therefore, the very same reason to conclude, that an intelligent mind produced the one, as the other (meaning by the word *mind* the subject of intelligence) and my idea of the *degree* of intelligence requisite for each of these productions, rises in proportion to the number of particulars necessary to be attended to in each, and the completeness with which they are adapted to the ends which they manifestly subserve. Judging by this obvious rule, I necessarily conclude, that the intelligence of the being that made myself and the world, must infinitely exceed that of the person who made the table or the watch.

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This simple argument for the being of a God, or an intelligent maker of all things, notwithstanding Dr. Oswald, out of his great zeal for religion, has mustered up all his logic to invalidate it, I consider as *irrefragable*, whether we be able to proceed any farther in the inquiry or not.

Again, for the same reason that the *maker* of the *table*, or of the *watch*, must be different from the *table*, or the *watch*, it is equally manifest that the maker of *myself*, of the *world*, and of the *universe*, (meaning by it all the worlds that we suppose to exist) must be a being different from myself, the world, or the universe; which is a sufficient answer to the reasoning of Spinoza, who, making the *universe itself* to be God, did, in fact, deny that there was any God. I am not acquainted with any arguments more conclusive than these; that is, supposing a God to exist, it is not in nature possible, that there could have been more, or stronger evidence of it than we find. This argument is, in fact, the foundation of all our practical and useful knowledge concerning God, and in this, the consideration of materiality or immateriality has certainly no concern.

The argument also against an *eternal succession of finite beings*, of *men*, for instance, none of which had any more knowledge or ability than another, is the very same on both the hypotheses, here being an effect without any

any adequate cause; since this *succession of men* must have required, at least, as much intelligence and power as the production of a *single man*, that is, an intelligence and power infinitely exceeding that of any man, and consequently that of any one in this supposed succession of men.

Also the conception of a being who had *no cause* is attended with just the same, and no greater difficulty on the supposition of this primary cause of all things being *material*, or *immaterial*. The *beginning of motion* in *matter*, or the *beginning of thought* in *mind*, is, in this view, the very same thing; because, judging by ourselves (from whence we get all the *data* that we have for forming any judgment in the case at all) every thought is as much caused by something in the body, or the mind preceding it, and influencing the mind, by certain invariable laws, as every motion of the body. We have no experience of any thing that can help us to form any judgment at all concerning the *original beginning of motion*, or *primary activity*, in any respect. To say that an *immaterial* being is capable of this, but that a *material* one is incapable of it, is merely deceiving ourselves, and concealing our ignorance, and total want of conception, in *words* only, without any ideas adequate to the subject.

A first cause, therefore, being proved in a manner quite independent of any consideration of materiality or immateriality, it follows

follows that the *eternity* and *unchangeableness* of the first cause stands upon the very same grounds upon either hypothesis, being derived simply from the consideration of an uncaused being.

If, from the consideration of these necessary attributes of a *first cause*, we proceed to the consideration of *the works of God*, we find innumerable things exactly similar to such as would unavoidably lead us to the ideas of *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness* in man; and therefore we are necessarily led to ascribe wisdom, power and goodness to this first cause. But to what kind of *essence* these attributes belong, material or immaterial, the effects themselves give us no information.

Lastly, the philosopher admits the belief of *one God*, in opposition to a multiplicity of Gods, on account of the *unity of design* apparent in the universe; and because it is contrary to the rules of philosophizing to suppose more causes than are necessary to explain effects. In this great argument, therefore, materiality or immateriality are equally unconcerned.

And in the same manner it might be shewn, that the argument for a *Divine Providence* suffers no injury whatever by this hypothesis. If nothing was *made*, it is equally certain that nothing can *happen*, or *come to pass*, without a design; and there can be no reason whatever why this should not extend to the smallest things, and the most seemingly inconsiderable events,

events, as well as to things of greater magnitude, and events of greater apparent moment. Besides, the smallest things, and the most trifling circumstances, may have the most important influences ; and therefore they could not be neglected in the comprehensive plan of Divine Providence, without an inattention to things of the greatest consequence that might depend upon them. So that, in a truly philosophical view, there is nothing exaggerated in our Saviour's saying, that *Even a sparrow falls not to the ground without the will, the knowledge, and design of our heavenly Father*, and that *the very hairs of our heads are numbered*.

If, after this candid, explicit, and I hope clear and satisfactory view of the subject, any person will tax my opinions, according to which the divine essence is nothing that was ever called matter, but something essentially different from it (though I have shewn that the belief of all his attributes and providence is compatible with *any* opinion concerning his essence) with *atheism*, I shall tax him with great *stupidity*, or *malignity*. In my own idea, I have all the foundation that the nature of things admits of for a firm belief in a first, eternal, unchangeable, and intelligent cause of all things ; and I have all the proof that can be given of his almighty power, infinite goodness, and constant providence. And this system of *natural religion* affords all the foundation

tion that can be had in support of *revealed religion*, the history of which is contained in the books of scripture, which I most cordially and thankfully receive; and the truth of which I have endeavoured in the best manner I have been able, to prove, in the second volume of my *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*.

That the hypothesis even of the *materiality of the divine nature* is not a dangerous one, is even demonstrable from this single consideration, that it is, in fact, the idea that all the vulgar actually do form of God, whenever they think of him at all. For a substance, properly *immaterial*, cannot give us any *proper idea* whatever; and some idea or other we cannot avoid having whenever we think of a being possessed of the attributes that we ascribe to God. It is necessarily either the idea of a being of some particular, though perhaps variable, form, or else infinitely diffused, and not the object of our senses. If, therefore, this idea could do harm, almost all mankind must have received that harm; and, notwithstanding all our laboured refinements, the evil is, with respect to the bulk of mankind at least, naturally irremediable. But no harm whatever has come from it, nor is any to be apprehended.

To shew that I am not singular in my idea of the perfect innocence of any method of expressing the divine essence, I shall close this section

section with the testimony of some of the most pious and respectable writers of the last and present age, and who cannot be suspected of any undue prejudice, because they did not embrace the system they plead in favour of. The writers I shall produce are Ramsay, Cudworth and Beaufsobre.

“ True atheism consists in denying, that “ there is a supreme intelligence which has “ produced the world by his power, and go- “ verns it by his wisdom \*.”

“ All corporealists must not be condemned “ for atheists, but only those of them who “ assert that there is no conscious intellectual “ nature presiding over the whole universe †.”

“ I am well persuaded, that God is a *pure* “ *intelligence*; but the more I reflect on the “ subject, the more disposed I find myself to “ treat the contrary opinion with indulgence. “ The ablest Cartesians acknowledge, that we “ have no idea of a spiritual substance. We “ only know by experience that it thinks, “ but we do not know what is the *nature* of “ the being, whose modifications are thoughts. “ We do not know what is the *foundation*, “ the *subject*, in which the thoughts inhere.

“ Secondly, whatever be the error of be- “ lieving God to be corporeal, religion suf- “ fers nothing by it. Adoration, the love of “ God, and obedience to his sovereign will, “ remain intire. He is not the less the *most*

\* Ramsay, p. 274.

† Cudworth, p. 156.

" *holy, the most high, the almighty, and the*  
 " *immortal*---Were Tertullian, Melito, &c.  
 " *who believed God to be corporeal; on that*  
 " *account, the less good Christians?* Lastly,  
 " *what ought at least to moderate the rage*  
 " *of those who are always ready to dart their*  
 " *anathemas, is, that the wisest of the Fathers*  
 " *acknowledge not only that the divine na-*  
 " *ture is inexplicable, but that we cannot*  
 " *speak of it without making use of expres-*  
 " *sions which agree to corporeal substances*  
 " *only \**."

## SECTION XVII.

*Observations on PERSONAL IDENTITY with  
respect to the future State of Man.*

THE opinion of the mortality of the thinking part of man is thought by some to be unfavourable to morality and religion, but without the least reason, as they who urge this objection at present, must be unacquainted with the sentiments of christian divines upon the subject in ancient and present times. The excellent bishop of Carlisle has sufficiently proved the insensibility of the soul from death to the resurrection (which has the same practical consequences) to be the doctrine of the scriptures, and the learned archdeacon Blackburne has traced the corruption of it from the earliest ages.

\* Beausobre, vol. i. p. 485.

In fact, the common opinion of the soul of man surviving the body was (as will be shewn) introduced into christianity from the Oriental and Greek philosophy, which in many respects exceedingly altered and debased the true christian system. This notion is one of the main bulwarks of popery; it was discarded by Luther, and many other reformers in England and abroad; and it was wisely left out in the last correction of the articles of the church of England, though incautiously retained in the burial service. Now, can it be supposed, that the apostles, the primitive Fathers, and modern reformers, should all adopt an opinion unfavourable to morality?

It was objected to the primitive christians, as it may be at present, that if all our hopes of a future life rest upon the doctrine of a *resurrection*, we place it upon a foundation that is very precarious. It is even said, that a proper resurrection is not only, in the highest degree, improbable, but even actually impossible; since, after death, the body putrefies, and the parts that composed it are dispersed, and form other bodies, which have an equal claim to the same resurrection. And where, they say, can be the propriety of rewards and punishments, if the man that rises again be not identically *the same* with the man that acted and died?

Now, though it is my own opinion, that we shall be *identically the same beings* after the resurrection that we are at present, I shall, for

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the sake of those who may entertain a different opinion, speculate a little upon their hypothesis; to shew that it is not inconsistent with a state of future rewards and punishments, and that it supplies motives sufficient for the regulation of our conduct here, with a view to it. And, metaphysical as the subject necessarily is, I do not despair of satisfying those who will give a due attention to it, that the propriety of rewards and punishments, with our hopes and fears derived from them, do not at all depend upon such a kind of identity as the objection that I have stated supposes.

If I may be allowed, for the sake of distinction, to introduce a new term, I would say, that *the identity of the man*, is different from *the identity of the person*; and it is the latter, and not the former, that we ought to consider in a disquisition of this kind. The distinction I have mentioned may appear a paradox, but, in fact, similar distinctions are not uncommon, and they may illustrate one another.

Ask any person to shew you the *river Thames*, and he will point to water flowing in a certain channel, and you will find that he does not consider the *banks*, or the *bed* of the river, to be any part of it. And yet, though the water be continually and visibly changing so as not to be the same any one day with the preceding, the use of language proves, that there is a sense in which it may be called, to every real purpose, the *same river* that it was a thousand

thousand years ago. So also the *Nile*, the *Euphrates*, and the *Tiber*, have an identity as rivers independently of the *water*, of which alone they consist. In the same manner *forests*, which consist of *trees* growing in certain places, preserve their identity, though all the trees of which they consist decay, and others grow up in their places.

In like manner, though every person should be satisfied of what I believe is not true, that in the course of nutrition, digestion and excretion, every particle of the body, and even of the brain (and it should be taken for granted, that the whole man consisted of nothing else) was entirely changed, and that this change, though gradual and insensible, could be demonstrated to take place completely in the course of a year, we should, I doubt not, still retain the idea of a real *identity*, and such a one as would be the proper foundation for probation, or self reproach, with respect to the past, and for hope and fear with respect to the future. A man would claim his wife, and a woman her husband, after more than a year's absence, debts of a year's standing would not be considered as cancelled, and the villain who had absconded for a year would not escape punishment.

In fact, the universal and firm belief of this hypothesis, would make no change whatever in our present conduct, or in our sense of *obligation*, respecting the duties of life, and the propriety of rewards and punishments; and

consequently all hopes and fears, and expectations of every kind, would operate exactly as before. For, notwithstanding the complete change of the *man*, there would be no change of what I should call the *person*.

Now, if the water of a river, the trees of a forest, or the particles that constitute the man, should change *every moment*, and we were all acquainted with it, it would make no more difference in our conduct, than if the same change had been considered as taking place more slowly. Supposing that this change should constantly take place during sleep, our behaviour to each other in the morning would still be regulated by a regard to the transactions of the preceding day. In this case, were any person fully persuaded, that every particle of which he consisted should be changed, he would, nevertheless, consider himself as being the *same person* to-morrow, that he was yesterday, and the same twenty years hence, that he was twenty years ago; and, I doubt not, he would feel himself concerned as for a *future self*, and regulate his conduct accordingly.

As far as the idea of identity is requisite, as a foundation for rewards and punishments, the *sameness and continuity of consciousness* seems to be the only circumstance attended to by us. If we knew that a person had by disease, or old age, lost all remembrance of his past actions, we should, in most cases, immediately see that there would be an impropriety in punishing

punishing him for his previous offences, as it would answer no *end* of punishment, to himself or others. In the case, however, of *notorious criminality*, the association of a man's crime, with every thing belonging to him, is so strong, and so extensive, that we wreak our vengeance upon the dead body, the children, the habitation, and every thing that had been connected with the criminal; and likewise in the case of *distinguished merit*, we extend our gratitude and benevolence to all the remains and connexions of the hero and the friend. But as men habituate themselves to reflection, they lay aside this *indiscriminate vengeance*, and confine it to the person of the criminal, and to the state in which he retains the remembrance of his crimes. Every thing farther is deemed barbarous and useless.

Admitting, therefore, that the man consists wholly of *matter*, as much as the *river* does of *water*, or the *forest* of *trees*, and that this matter should be wholly changed in the interval between death and the resurrection; yet, if, after this state, we shall all know one another again, and converse together as before, we shall be, to all intents and purposes, the *same persons*. Our *personal identity* will be sufficiently preserved, and the expectation of it at present will have a proper influence on our conduct.

To consider the matter philosophically, what peculiar excellence is there in those particles of matter which compose my body, more than

those which compose the table on which I write; and consequently, what *rational motive* can I have for preferring, or attaching myself to the one more than to the other. If I knew that they were instantly, and without any painful sensation to myself, to change places, I do not think that it would give me any concern. As to those who are incapable of reflecting in this manner, as they cannot understand the *objection*, there is no occasion to make them understand the *answer*.

However, notwithstanding I give this solution of the difficulty, for the satisfaction of sceptical and metaphysical persons, I myself believe the doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead* in another, and more literal sense. Death, with its concomitant putrefaction, and dispersion of parts, is only a *decomposition*; and whatever is *decomposed* may be *recomposed* by the being who first composed it; and I doubt not but that, in the proper sense of the word, *the same body* that dies shall rise again, not with every thing that is *adventitious* and *extraneous* (as all that we receive by nutrition) but with the same *stamina*, or those particles that really belonged to the *germ* of the organisical body. And there can be no proof that these particles are ever properly destroyed, or interchanged. This opinion was advanced by Dr. Watts, and no man can say that it is unphilosophical.

That excellent philosopher, Mr. Bonnet, supposes (and advances a variety of arguments from

from new and curious experiments on the reproduction of the parts of animals to prove) that all the *germs* of future plants, organical bodies of all kinds, and the reproducible parts of them, were really contained in the first germ; and though the consideration confounds us when we contemplate it, we are not more confounded than in the contemplation of other views of the system of which we make a part; and the thing is no more incompatible with our idea of the omnipotence of its author. Those who laugh at the mere mention of such a thing, have certainly a small share of *natural science*, which indeed generally accompanies conceit and dogmatism.

This idea of the doctrine of the resurrection is perfectly agreeable to the light in which St. Paul represents it (though I should not condemn his comparison, if it should be found not to be so complete) when he compares it to the revival of a *seed* that has been sown in the earth, and become seemingly *dead*. For the *germ* does not die, and in our future transformation we may be as different from what we are in our present state, as the *plant* is from the *seed*, or the *butterfly* from the *egg*, and yet be essentially the same.

Dr. Hartley also, and others, suppose that, strictly speaking, there will be nothing more *miraculous* in our resurrection to a future life, than there was in our *birth*, to the present; for that, in the circumstances in which the world will be at the general consummation of all things,

things, these *germs*, as we may call them, may naturally and necessarily revive, according to some fixed, but to us, unknown laws of nature.

There have even been unbelievers in revelation, who have seen nothing to object to in this supposition.

“ Let us not,” says the author of *Man a Machine*\*, “ pretend to say, that every man a chine, or animal, is intirely annihilated after death, nor that they put on another form, since we are quite in the dark as to this point. To affirm an immortal machine to be a chimera, a fiction of our brain, appears to be as absurd as it would seem in caterpillars, when they see the dead bodies of their kind, bitterly to lament the fate of their species, which would seem to them to be utterly destroyed. The soul of these insects is too narrow and confined to be able to comprehend the transformation of their nature. Never did any one of the acutest amongst them entertain the least notion that he would become a butterfly. It is the very same case with us. What do we know of our future destiny more than we do of our original?”

I shall close this section with some observations respecting a *term* I made use of when I gave to the public the first hint of the sentiment maintained in this treatise, which was in my edition of *Dr. Hartley's Theory*. It

\* P. 84.

was

was that, according to appearances, *the whole man becomes extinct at death*. This was thought to be rather incautious by some of my friends, and my enemies eagerly catched at it, as thinking I had given them a great advantage over me; and yet I still think the term very proper, and that to object to this application, betrays an ignorance even of the real meaning of that English word.

Some of them seem to have supposed, that by *the extinction of the whole man*, I mean the absolute *annihilation* of him, so that when a man dies, whatever it was that constituted him, *ceases to exist*. But then I must have supposed, that the moment a man is dead, he absolutely *vanishes away*, so that his friends can find nothing of him left to carry to the grave. Mr. Hallet, treating of this subject, uses an expression much more nearly approaching to the idea of *annihilation*, when he says\*, “ It looks as if the whole man was “ *gone*,” and I do not know that the expression was ever objected to.

Nor does the word *extinction*, as it is generally understood, imply any such thing as *annihilation*. When we say, that a *candle is extinguished*, which is using the word in its primary, and most proper sense, we surely do not mean that it is annihilated, and therefore, that there is nothing left to light again. Even the *particles of light* which it has emitted we only suppose to be *dispersed*, and there-

\* See page 30 of this treatise.

fore to be capable of being *collected* again. As, therefore, a candle, though extinguished, is capable of being lighted again, so, though a man may be said, figuratively speaking, *to become extinct at death*, and his capacity for thinking cease, it may only be for a time: for no particle of that which ever constituted the man is lost. And, as I observed before, whatever is *decomposed* may certainly be *re-composed*, by the same almighty power that first composed it, with whatever change in its constitution, advantageous or disadvantageous, he shall think proper; and then the powers of thinking, and whatever depended upon them, will return of course, and the man will be, in the most proper sense, *the same being that he was before.*

This is precisely the apostle Paul's idea of *the resurrection of the dead*, as the only foundation for a future life; and it is to this to which I mean to adhere, exclusive of all the additional vain supports which either the Oriental, or *Platonic* philosophy has been thought to afford to this great doctrine of *pure revelation*. I have, however, been represented as having, by this view of the subject, furnished a stronger argument against revelation than any that infidelity has hitherto discovered, and the atheists of the age have been described as *triumphing* in my concessions; when, whatever triumph atheists may derive from my concessions, and my writings, the very

very same they may derive from the writings of *St. Paul* himself, which is certainly much more to their purpose.

Farther, though I have been charged with being an abetter of *atheism*, it has been, by persons who have urged against my opinion, the hackneyed objection, that all unbelievers of ancient and modern times have made against the doctrine of *any resurrection*, viz. from the consideration of the matter that once composed the human body entering, afterwards, into the composition of plants, animals, &c. not considering that this objection equally affects the doctrine of *St. Paul*, and that of all christians, who maintain what may, by any possible construction of the words, be called *a resurrection of the dead*; which certainly requires that it is something that dies, and is put into the grave (and an *immaterial soul* is never supposed to die at all) that must *revive*, and *rise again out of it*.

## SECTION XVIII.

*Of the Origin of the popular Opinions concerning the Soul.*

THOUGH truth be a thing altogether independent of the *opinions of men*, yet when any erroneous doctrine has prevailed long in the world, and has had a very general spread, we are apt to suspect that it must have come from some sufficient authority, unless we be able to trace the rise and progress of it, and can assign some plausible reason for its general reception. On this account, I shall enter into a pretty large historical detail concerning the system that I have, in this treatise, called in question ; and I hope to be able to shew, that it can by no means boast so respectable an origin as many are willing to ascribe to it. On the contrary, I hope to make it appear, that it has arisen from nothing but mere superstition, and the vain imaginations of men, flattering themselves with a higher origin than they had any proper claim to, though the precise date of the system may be of too remote antiquity to be ascertained with absolute certainty at this day.

The notion of the soul of man being a substance distinct from the body, has been shown, and I hope to satisfaction, not to have been known

known to the writers of the scriptures, and especially those of the Old Testament. According to the uniform system of revelation, all our hopes of a future life are built upon another, and I may say an opposite foundation, viz. that of the *resurrection* of something belonging to us that *dies*, and is buried, that is, the *body*, which is always considered as *the man*. This doctrine is manifestly superfluous on the idea of the soul being a substance so distinct from the body as to be unaffected by its death, and able to subsist, and even to be more free and happy, without the body. This opinion, therefore, not having been known to the *Jews*, and being repugnant to the scheme of *revelation*, must have had its source in *heathenism*; but with respect to the date of its appearance, and the manner of its introduction, there is room for conjecture and speculation.

As far as we are able to collect any thing concerning the history of this opinion, it is evidently not the growth of Greece or Rome, but was received by the philosophers of those countries either from Egypt, or the countries more to the East. The Greeks in general refer it to the Egyptians, but Pausanias gives it to the Chaldeans, or the Indians. I own, however (though every thing relating to so very obscure a subject must be in a great measure conjectural) that I am inclined to ascribe it to the Egyptians; thinking, with Mr. Toland, that it might possibly have been suggested

gested by some of their known customs respecting the dead, whom they preserved with great care, and disposed of with a solemnity unknown to other nations; though it might have arisen among them from other causes without the help of those peculiar customs.

The authority of Herodotus, the oldest Greek historian, and who had himself travelled into Egypt, is very express to this purpose. He says\*, that “ the Egyptians were “ the first who maintained that the soul of “ man is immortal, that when the body “ dies it enters into that of some other “ animal, and when it has transmigrated “ through all terrestrial, marine, and flying “ animals, it returns to the body of a man “ again. This revolution is completed in “ three thousand years.” He adds, that “ several Greeks, whose names he would not “ mention, had published that doctrine as “ their own.”

Mr. Toland’s hypothesis is as follows, and I think I should do wrong to omit the mention of it. My reader may judge of the probability of it for himself. “ The funeral rites “ of the Egyptians,” he says †, “ and their “ historical method of preserving the memory of deserving persons, seems to have been “ the occasion of this belief. Their way of “ burying was by embalming the dead bodies, “ which they deposited in a subterranean

\* Ed. Steph. p. 137.

† Letters to Serena, p. 45.

“ grotto,

“ grotto, where they continued intire for  
 “ thousands of years; so that before any notion  
 “ of separate or immortal souls, the common  
 “ language was, that *such a one was under*  
 “ *ground, that he was carried over the river*  
 “ *Acberusia by Charon* (the title of the public  
 “ ferryman for that purpose) and *laid happily*  
 “ *to rest in the Elysian fields*, which was the  
 “ common burying place near Memphis.”

This hypothesis is rendered more probable by an observation of Cicero's. He says †, “ the bodies falling to the ground, and being buried there, it was imagined that the deceased passed the rest of their life under ground.” Among other absurdities flowing from this notion, he says that, though the bodies were buried, they still imagined them to be *apud inferos*; and whereas they could not conceive the mind to exist of itself, they gave it a form or figure.

I think, however, that the notion of there being something in man distinct from his body, and the cause of his feeling, thinking, willing, and his other mental operations and affections, might very well occur in those rude ages without such a step as this; though no doubt the custom above-mentioned would much contribute to it. Nothing is more common than to observe how very ready all illiterate persons are to ascribe the cause of any difficult appearance to an *invisible agent*, dis-

† Tusculan Questions, Ed. Glaf. p. 37.

distinct from the subject on which the operation is exerted. This led the Jews (after the heathens) to the idea of madmen being possessed of dæmons, and it is peculiarly remarkable, how very ready mankind have always been to ascribe the unknown cause of extraordinary appearances to something to which they can give the name *spirit*, after this term had been once applied in a similar manner. Thus, that which struck an animal dead over fermenting liquor, was first called *the gas*, or *spirit of the liquor*, while the fermented liquor itself also, being possessed of very active powers, was thought to contain *another kind of spirit*; and many times do we hear ignorant persons, on seeing a remarkable experiment in philosophy, especially if *air*, or any *invisible fluid*, be concerned in it, perfectly satisfied with saying, that is the *spirit of it*. Now, though the idea of a spirit, as a distinct substance from the body, did not perhaps immediately occur in all these cases, their conceptions might afford a foundation for such an hypothesis.

It would be most natural, however, at first, to ascribe the cause of thought to something that made a *visible* difference between a living and a dead man; and *breathing* being the most obvious difference of this kind, those powers would be ascribed to his *breath*: and accordingly we find, that in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, the name of the *soul* is the same with that of *breath*. From whence we

we may safely infer, that originally it was considered as nothing else, and hence the custom of receiving the *parting breath* of dying persons, as if to catch their departing souls. And though, to appearance, the breath of a man mixes with the rest of the air, yet, the nature of air being very little known, it was not at all extraordinary, that it should have been considered as not *really* mixing with the atmosphere, but as ascending by its levity to the higher regions above the clouds. And men having got this idea, the notion of its having *come down from above the clouds*, where God was supposed to reside, would naturally enough follow.

But living bodies differ from dead ones by their *warmth*, as well as by the circumstance of breathing. Hence might come the idea of the principle of life and thought being a kind of *vital fire*; and, as flame always ascends, men would, of course, imagine that the soul of man, when set loose from the body, would ascend to the *region of fire*, which was supposed to be above the atmosphere. From these leading ideas, it could not be difficult for the imagination of speculative men to make out a complete system of *pre-existence* and *transmigration*; and there being so much of *fancy* in it, it is still less to be wondered at, that it should have been diversified so much as we find to have been in different countries, and different schools of philosophy.

Diseases and other evils having their seat in the *body*, the *matter* of which it is composed might easily be conceived to be the source of those and all other evils; a disordered mind being, in many cases, the evident effect of a disordered body; and they who were disposed to believe in a benevolent deity, would by this means easily make out to themselves a reason for the *origin of evil*, without reflecting any blame upon God on that account. They would ascribe it to the *untractable nature of matter*.

Lastly, what could be more natural to account for the ethereal soul being confined to such a body or clog, as the supposition of its being a punishment for offences committed in a pre-existent state?

But the notion of a proper *immaterial being*, without all *extension*, or *relation to place*, did not appear till of late years in comparison; what the ancients meant by an immaterial substance being nothing more than an *attenuated matter*, like *air*, *ether*, *fire*, or *light*, considered as fluids, beyond which their idea of *incorporeity* did not go. Psellus says, that the ancient Heathens, both Greeks and others, called only the grosser bodies,  $\tau\alpha\pi\alpha\chi\eta\delta\eta\pi\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\alpha\sigma\omega\mu\alpha\omega\pi$  corporeal\*.

Indeed, the vulgar notion of a *soul*, or *spirit*, wherever it has been found to exist, has been the same in all ages; and in this re-

\* Le Cierc's Index Philologicus, Materia.

spect,

spect, even the learned of ancient times are only to be considered as the vulgar. We gather from Homer, that the belief of his time was, that the ghost bore the shape of, and exactly resembled, the deceased person to whom it had belonged, that it wandered upon the earth, near the place where the body lay, till it was buried, at which time it was admitted to the shades below. In both these states it was possessed of the intire consciousness, and retained the friendships and enmitiess of the man. But in the case of deified persons, it was supposed that, besides this ghost, there was something more ethereal, or divine belonging to them, like *another better self*, that ascended to the upper regions, and was associated with the immortal gods.

All the Pagans of the East, says Loubiere, (quoted by Mr. Locke\*) do truly believe, that "there remains something of a man after his death, which subsists independently and separately from his body. But they give extension and figure to that which remains, and attribute to it all the same members, all the same substances, both solid and liquid, which bodies are composed of. They only suppose, that souls are of a matter subtle enough to escape being seen or handled."

When it had been imagined, that the vital and thinking powers of man resided in a dis-

\* Essay, vol. ii. page 162.

tinct principle or substance, it would be natural to ascribe such a principle to every thing that had *motion*, and especially a regular motion, and that had any remarkable *influences*, good or bad, particularly to such resplendent bodies as the *sun, moon, stars, and planets*. Accordingly, we find it to be one of the oldest opinions in heathen antiquity, that those heavenly bodies were animated as well as men. This opinion was even held by Origen, and other philosophizing christians.

Mr. Toland, however, conjectures that another Egyptian custom might facilitate the introduction of this system. " Among other " methods," he says †, " the Egyptians had " of perpetuating events, the surest of all was " to impose the names of memorable persons " and things on the constellations, as the only " eternal monuments, not subject to the vio- " lence of men or brutes, nor to the injury " of time or weather. This custom was de- " rived from them to other nations, who " changed, indeed, the names, but gave new " ones to the stars for the same end. And " the inconsiderate vulgar, hearing the learned " constantly talk of certain persons, as *in the* " *stars*, believed them at last to be really " there, and that all the others were *under* " *ground*." One may add, that this might possibly give rise to the notion of a *twofold* *soul*, one that went under ground, and another that went to the stars.

† Letters to Serena, p. 46.

Upon

Upon the whole, Mr. Toland's conjecture appears to me not to be destitute of probability. How far the Egyptians really carried their notions concerning the state of human souls, before or after death, doth not distinctly appear, because we have no Egyptian writings. But it is probable, that their ideas never ripened into such a system as was afterwards found in the East, on account of their empire and civil polity having been too soon overturned, and the country having undergone such a number of revolutions. Accordingly we find, that those who introduced as much of this system as was received in Greece did, in general, travel into the East for it.

## S E C T I O N XIX.

*A View of the different Opinions that have been held concerning the DIVINE ESSENCE, especially with a View to the Doctrine of Immortality.*

I HAVE considered the doctrine of proper immateriality both by the light of nature, and also of the scriptures, without finding any foundation for it in either. I shall now endeavour to trace what have been the notions that men in different ages, and systems of philosophy, have entertained with respect to it; having little doubt but that it will appear,

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P 4 to

behind another, either the heavens, or the world; but, that it will be revealed (i. e. become visible) some time. The Magi, and Chaldeans also say, that God in his body resembles light, and in his mind *truth*\*. But truth is only a *property*, and no *substance* whatever. According to the same author †, the first production of this great intellectual light or fire, was the *υπερκοσμιον οὐς*, the supramundane light, which is defined to be *an infinite, incorporeal, and lucid space, the happy seat of intellectual natures*. Of this it is not easy to form an idea; but it may receive some little illustration from a notion of the Cabalists, who say, that all spirits were made out of the *holy Ghost*, or spirit of God, which was made first.

The Cabalists, indeed, say that all creatures are emanations from the eternal Being, and that the attributes of the Deity being infinite, may produce an infinity of effects. It is extended when this substance composes spirits, and contracted when it makes matter ‡, so that it is evident, they could have no notion of any thing properly immaterial. This doctrine of the Cabalists exists in the East, and probably came from thence.

The divine fire, the Magi say, was distributed to all creatures, and before all to the *prima mens*, as the oracles of Zoroaster teach, and then to other eternal and incorporeal natures, in which class are included innumerable

\* Stanley by Le Clerc, p. 25.      † P. 26.

‡ Bafnage, vol. iii. p. 93.

inferior

inferior gods, angels, good demons, and the souls of men.

To come to the Greek philosophy, we find that Pythagoras, after the Magi, says that God, in his body, resembles light, and in his soul truth. He is the universal spirit, that penetrates and diffuses itself through all nature\*. Heraclitus defines God to be a subtle and swift substance, *το λεπτότερον καὶ το ταχύτερον*, which permeates and pervades the whole universe†. This is certainly no proper description of immateriality. Democritus also said, that God was of the form of fire, *εμπυρωειδῆς*‡.

Austin says, that he learned of the philosophers the incorporeality of God; but it is not easy, says Beausobre §, to determine what they meant by the *incorporeality of God*. In their language it did not exclude *extension*, or *body* in a philosophical sense. Xenophanes, for example, believed that God was one, and eternal; but by this he only meant, that he was not material, organized, and like a man. The *ατοματοῦ*, or the *incorporeal* of the Greeks, he adds, means nothing more than a subtle body, for example, like the air, as Origen has shewed in his *Principles*. Among the Latins, Austin imagined that there was a *spiritual matter*, out of which God made souls ||, which agrees with the notion above-mentioned of the Jewish Cabalists.

\* Ramsay, p. 257. † Cudworth, p. 505.

‡ Plutarch De Placitis Philosophorum, lib. i.

§ Vol. i. p. 482 || Ibid.

As to Plato, the same writer says, “ I can-  
 “ not say precisely what was his idea of the  
 “ spirituality of God. The manner in which  
 “ he expresses the formation of souls implies,  
 “ that his *indivisible substance* is not absolutely  
 “ without extension. He supposed that God  
 “ took of both substances, the divisible and  
 “ the indivisible, and, mixing them toge-  
 “ ther, made a third, which is a soul. But  
 “ this mixing of two substances, and the  
 “ reciprocal action of the one upon the  
 “ other, cannot be conceived, if the one  
 “ be extended, and the other be abso-  
 “ lutely without extension \*.” Besides,  
 Plato speaks of God as  $\deltaια πενηντων$  perv-  
 yading all things, and he derives the word  
 $\deltaιναιον$ , which is applied to God from  $\deltaια$  *over*  
*passing through*, which does not suggest the  
 idea of a proper immaterial being.

God, angels, and dæmons, says Porphyry  
 and Jamblichus, are made of matter, but have  
 no relation to what is corporeal †.

According to Cudworth, ‡ Aristotle defines  
 incorporeal substances very properly, and says  
 that God is such a substance; but if he did  
 not make mind a mere *property*, he could only  
 mean that it was something of a subtle nature  
 that eluded our senses.

The opinion of the Stoics, concerning God,  
 had nothing of incorporeal in it, but many

\* Ib. 482. † Encyclopedie, Article Immaterialism.

‡ P. 19.

circumstances which shew it to have been derived from the Oriental philosophy, as were other particulars of their doctrine. The following account of it is given by the accurate Mrs. Carter.

“ The Stoicks plainly speak of the world as “ God, or of God as the soul of the world, “ which they call his substance, and I do not,” she says, “ recollect any proof that they believed him to exist in the extramundane “ space. Yet they held the world to be finite “ and corruptible, and that, at certain periods, “ it was to undergo successive conflagrations, “ and then all beings were to be resorbed into “ God, and again reproduced by him \*.”

“ They sometimes define God to be an intelligent fiery spirit, without form, but passing into whatever things it pleases, and assimilating itself to all; sometimes an active operative fire. They, moreover, expressly speak of God as corporeal, which is objected to them by Plutarch. Indeed, they define all essence to be body †. They held the eternity of matter, as a passive principle, but that was reduced into form by God, and that the world was made, and is continually governed by him ‡. They imagined the whole universe to be peopled with gods and dæmons, and among other divinities they reckoned the sun, moon, and

\* Dissertation prefixed to her Translation of Epictetus,  
p. 7.                    † Ib. p. 8.                    ‡ P. 9.

“ stars,

“ stars, which they conceived to be animated  
 “ and intelligent, or inhabited by particular deities,  
 “ as the body is by the soul, who presided  
 “ over them, and directed their motions\*.”

The doctrine of the early christian heretics, who are known to have derived their opinions from the East, may help to throw some light upon those ancient tenets, as they may be presumed to be very nearly the same. The Valentinians and Manicheans said that God was an eternal, intelligent, and pure light, without any mixture of darkness, as we learn from Beausobre †. He elsewhere observes, that this is the language of the Magi, the Cabalists, and many of the Greek philosophers ‡. It appears by another circumstance, that they did not consider the divine essence as so far incorporeal as to be *invisible*, for they maintained, that the luminous substance that was seen by the apostles on the mount of transfiguration was God §. Also, though the Manicheans said, that God was indivisible and simple, they supposed, that he had real extension, and was even bounded by the regions of darkness, with which the divine essence did not mix ||. Austin, while he was a Manichean, thought that God was corporeal, and extended, dispersed through the world; and into infinite space; because, as he observes, he could form no idea of a

\* Dissertation prefixed to her Translation of Epictetus, p. 10.

† Vol. i. p. 466.

‡ Ib. p. 468.

§ Ib. 470.

|| Ib. 503. 513.

substance that had neither place nor extension\*. From these circumstances we may learn in what sense to understand other philosophers and divines of those early ages, when they speak of the *simplicity*, *spirituality*, and *indivisibility* of the divine essence.

I now proceed to give some account of the opinions of some of the *christian Fathers* on this subject, which, I doubt not, will greatly surprize those of my readers who are not much acquainted with *christian antiquity*. It is, however, almost wholly taken from that learned and excellent critic Beausobre. The ablest and most orthodox *christian Fathers*, he says †, always say that God is a *light*, and a *sublime light*, and that all the celestial powers which surround the Deity are *lights of a second order, rays of the first light*. This is the general style of the Fathers before and after the council of Nice. The *word*, they say, is a light, that is come into the world, proceeding from the self-existent light, an emanation of *light from light* ‡.

The *christians*, says the same writer, who were always unanimous with respect to the *unity* of God, were by no means so with respect to his *nature*. The *scriptures* not being explicit on the subject, each adopted what he thought the most probable opinion, or that of the philosophical school in which he had been educated. Thus an *Epicurean* who embraced

\* Ib. 473. † Vol. i. p. 468.

‡ P. 469.

christianity was inclined to clothe the Deity with a *human form*, a Platonist said that God was *incorporeal*, and a Pythagorean that he was an *intelligent light, or fire*. Another imagined, that the essence of God was corporeal, but subtle, and etherial, penetrating all bodies. Another, with Aristotle, that it had nothing in it of the elements that composed this world, but believed it to be of a *fifth nature*.

“ In general,” says my author\*, “ the idea of a substance absolutely *incorporeal* was not a common idea with christians at the beginning. When I, he adds, consider with what confidence Tertullian, who thought that God was corporeal, and *figured*, speaks of his opinion, it makes me suspect that it must have been the general opinion of the Latin church. Who can deny, says he, that God is a body, though he is a spirit? Every spirit is a body, and has a *form* proper to it. Melito, so much boasted of for his virtues and knowledge, composed a treatise to prove that God is corporeal†.”

The incorporality of the Fathers†, did not exclude *visibility*, nor in consequence all sort of corporality. For there would be a manifest contradiction in saying, that corporeal eyes can see a being that has absolutely no extension. Thoſe bishops also, who composed the council of Constantinople, which decreed that there is an emanation from the divine essence of an *uncreated light*, which is, as it

\* P. 474.      † P. 474.      ‡ P. 472.

were

were, his garment, and which appeared at the transfiguration of Christ, must have believed God to have been a luminous substance; for it is impossible that a visible, and consequently a corporeal light, should be an emanation from a pure spirit\*.

On the mention of this subject, it may not be amiss to observe, that there was a famous dispute among the Greeks of the fourteenth century, whether the light which surrounded Christ at his transfiguration was created or uncreated. Gregorius Palamas, a famous monk of mount Athos, maintained that it was uncreated, and Barlaam maintained the contrary opinion. It was objected to Palamas, that an uncreated light could not be seen by mortal eyes. But Leo Allatius attempted to remove this difficulty, by saying, that if mortal eyes were fortified by a divine virtue, they might see the deity himself †.

When, continues my author ‡, I consider the manner in which the Greek Fathers explain the *incarnation of Christ*, I cannot help concluding, that they thought the divine nature corporeal. The incarnation, say they, is a perfect mixture of the two natures, the spiritual and subtle nature penetrates the material and corporeal nature, till it is dispersed through the whole of that nature, and mixed entirely with it, so that there is no place in the material nature that is void of the spiritual nature §.

\* P. 472. † P. 470. ‡ P. 476. § P. 476.

Clemens of Alexandria says, in so many words, that *God is corporeal* \*. Justin says, All substance, which, on account of its tenuity, cannot be subject to any other, has, nevertheless, a *body*, which constitutes its essence. If we call God *incorporeal*, it is not that he is so in reality, but to speak of him in the most respectable manner. It is because the essence of God cannot be perceived, and that we are not sensible of it, that we call it *incorporeal* †.

Tertullian believed God to be a body, because he thought that what was not a body was *nothing*. He says, when we endeavour to form an idea of the divinity, we cannot conceive of it but as a very pure *luminous air*, diffused every where ‡. Origen observed, that the word *incorporeal* is not in the Bible §, and Jerom reproached him with making God corporeal. Maximus did not believe the *immensity* of the divine substance, nor could any of those who thought him corporeal; because it was a maxim with them, that two substances could not be in the same place at the same time ||. Austin says, that God is a *spiritual light*, and that this light is no other than *truth*. Is truth nothing, says he, because it is not diffused through space, finite or infinite \*\*. This is the very language of the Magi.

\* Encyclopedie, article *Immaterialism*.

† Ibid.

‡ Beaufobre, p. 477. § P. 484.

|| P. 475.

\*\* P. 481.

Those passages of scripture which speak of God as a *spirit*, were so far from deciding this controversy in favour of the immateriality of the divine essence, that those christians who believed God to be corporeal, alledged, in favour of their opinion, that very expression of our Saviour, that *God is a spirit*. Can you, says Gregory Nazianzen, conceive of a spirit without conceiving *motion*, and *diffusion*, properties which agree only to body. Origen says, that every spirit, according to the proper and simple notion of the word, signifies a body. This is confirmed by Chalcidius. The idea of a spirit, according to the ancients, was nothing but an invisible, living, thinking, free, and immortal being, which has within itself the principle of its actions and motions \*.

If the modern metaphysician be shocked at what he has heard already, what will he say of the *Anthropomorphites*, who maintained, that God had even a human form? and yet Beausobre says †, that this error is so ancient, that it is hardly possible to find the origin of it. They supposed that God had a body, subtle like light, but with organs exactly like the human body, not for *necessity*, but for *ornament*, believing it to be the most excellent of all forms. This opinion must have been very common in the East. The contrary opinion was even considered as heresy, because it was the opinion of Simon Magus.

\* P. 485.      † P. 502.

Melito, bishop of Sardis, wrote in favour of this opinion, and though it was combated by Novatian in the West, and by Origen in the East, it still kept its ground in the church. The monks, who soon became very powerful, undertook its defence, and almost all the anchorites of Nitria were so attached to it, that, on this account, they raised violent seditions against their patriarch Theophilus, and exclaimed against the memory and writings of Origen \*.

They who did not believe the immensity of God, believed, nevertheless, his *infinity*, because he knows all things, and acts every where. There is but one true God, says the author of the Clementine Homilies. He is adorned with the most *excellent form*, he presides over all beings, celestial and terrestrial, and conducts all events. He is in the world, as the heart is in the man; and from him, as from a center, there is continually diffused a vivifying and incorporeal virtue, which animates and supports all things †.

As we come nearer to the present time, we shall find, that the metaphysical turn of those who are usually called *schoolmen*, refined upon the notions of the early Fathers, as will appear more distinctly when I recite their opinions concerning the human soul; but still, some of the properties of matter were ascribed to spirits even till very near our times. It is

\* P. 502.

† P. 507.

some-

something remarkable, however, that we find in the works of Gregory the Great, who flourished in the sixth century, expressions more nearly approaching to the modern language, than any that were generally used long after his time. The only question is, whether he had precisely the same ideas to his words.

He says, that God penetrates every thing without extenuation, and surrounds every thing without extension; he is *superior et inferior sine loco, amplior sine latitudine, subtilior sine extenuatione*. Speaking of Satan going out from the presence of God, he says, how can he go from him who *per molem corporis nusquam est, sed per incircumscripam substantiam nusquam deest*\*?

Damascenus, who wrote in the eighth century, says, that God is not *in loco*, for he is a place to himself, filling all things, and himself embracing (*complectens*) all things; for he, without any mixture, pervades all things, *omnia permeat*†.

Photius, in the ninth century, says, that God is not in the world as created beings are, but in a more sublime manner; that he is in every thing, and above all things; that he is in all things by his operation, but, that his *act* being his *substance*, one may truly say, he is, both in *act* and *substance*, every where‡.

\* *Opera*, p. 6. H. I.      † *Opera*, p. 281.

‡ *Dupin*, vol. vii. p. 109.

Gautier of Mauritania, in the twelfth century, maintained against Thierry, that God is omnipresent by his essence, as well as by his power\*.

T. Aquinas, also, and the other schoolmen, say, that God is every where by his *essence*, as well as his *power*†. He says farther, that God is a *pure act*, *purus actus*‡, that he is in all places and all things, not excluding other things, but as *containing them*, not contained by them: and as the whole soul is in every part of the body, so the whole Deity is in all, and every thing. *Deus totus est in omnibus et singulis*§. If they had any ideas to this language, which indeed is not easy to suppose, they must have considered the divine essence as not destitute of extension, and in this state the opinion continued till the reformation,

Crellius, giving a summary view of what was generally asserted concerning God, mentions the following positions, which he justly considers as contradictory: that God is infinite (with respect to immensity) and yet, wholly contained in the smallest particle of dust, or point of space; that he so exists in any whole body, that there is no part of the body that is not full of God, nor, on the other hand, is there any part of the divine essence that is not in the body||.

\* Dupin, vol. x. p. 173.    + Summa, p. 281.    † P. 7.

§ P. 7, 16.

|| De Deo, cap. 27.

Bayle says, that till Descartes, all doctors, divines, and philosophers, gave extension to spirit, an infinite one to God, and a finite one to angels and rational souls. He and his followers, say the writers of the *Encyclopedie* (Article *Immensité*) first denied, that God was present any where by his *substance*, but only by his *knowledge* and *power*, having *no relation to place*; that otherwise he would be extended and corporeal, for he made extension to be a proper definition of matter.

Beausobre, indeed, says\*, that philosophers before Descartes made the extension of spirits not to be material, nor composed of parts, and that spirits are, with respect to the place that they occupy, *toti in toto, et toti in singulis partibus*. The Cartesians, says he, have overturned all these opinions; maintaining, that spirits have no extension, nor local presence. But he adds this system is rejected as absurd. It has appeared, however, that *local presence* was not admitted by all the writers here referred to.

Some very respectable writers, since Descartes, have rejected his metaphysical notions. Thus, Beza, in answer to Marnix, who maintained, that the divine omnipresence respected his *power* and *majesty* only, asserted his *proper* and *substantial immensity* †.

We shall the less wonder at Descartes's metaphysical refinements with respect to the divine *essence* and *presence*, when we consider the

\* Vol. i. p. 482.

† Beausobre, vol. i. p. 507.

manner in which he proved the *being* of God. He discovered within himself the idea of an eternal, infinite, and all-perfect being. But every idea having an archetype, this must have one; and *existence* being a perfection, this perfect being, or God, must actually and necessarily exist.

## SECTION XX.

*An Account of the different Opinions that have been maintained concerning the SOUL.*

THE state of opinions relating to the *divine essence* is a sufficient guide to us with respect to the doctrine concerning the *human soul*, and other finite intelligences, as they necessarily correspond to one another. But for this reason, in order to gain intire satisfaction with respect to either subject, we must examine them both separately. I shall, therefore, in this section, go over the same ground as in the last, in order to select what has been advanced concerning the *human soul*, as distinct from the Divine Being. And this will be the more useful, as it will, at the same time, shew the derivation of the philosophical doctrine on this subject in the Western part of the world, from the Oriental system. So that in the more ancient times, there was no material difference of opinion with respect to it. And the

the many wild opinions that have been entertained in later times will be an instructive warning to us, of the consequence of departing from the dictates of *revelation*; which are indeed those of the soundest *philosophy*, and of *common sense*.

## P A R T I.

*The Opinions of the Heathens and Jews.*

THE opinion of the ancient *Perians* concerning the soul is clearly enough expressed in the following verse from the *Oracles of Zoroaster*, whether they be genuine or not.

*Eἰσι τὰντα τούπος εὐρεῖσθαι. L. 29.*

*They are all produced from one fire.* Souls were, therefore, of the nature of *fire*. We find, however, in later times, several distinctions with respect to the soul, in the Eastern part of the world; and these also were copied, with some variation, by the Greeks and christians. The hypothesis of *two souls*, one of a celestial substance, or the rational soul, and the other material, the seat of the passions, was very generally received. It was, says *Beausobre*\*, that of the Magi, the Chaldeans, and Egyptians; and Pythagoras and Plato

\* Vol. ii. p. 420.

had

had it from them. It was also an old opinion in the Barbaric philosophy, that man derives his body from the earth, his soul, *ψυχή*, from the moon, and his spirit, *νεῦρα*, from the sun; and that after death each of them returns to its proper origin\*. We find, also, some difference of opinion, with respect to the place where the souls were disposed of after death. The Chaldeans thought that the place of departed spirits was *above the world*, but the Greeks thought it was *below*†.

We have no very satisfactory account of the philosophy of the *Chinese*. It appears, however, that Confusius believed no future state of rewards and punishments. Being asked what angels or spirits are, he answered, they are *air*; and this, says Leland ‡, is the notion that the *Chinese* have of the soul. They look upon it to be a material thing, though highly rarefied.

When we come to the *Greek philosophy*, we find a considerable variety of opinions with respect to the essence of the soul; but all of them, who believed that there was properly any such thing as a soul, held the opinion of its being an *emanation from the Divine Being*. Cudworth says §, that all the ancients who asserted the soul's immortality, held that it was not generated, or made out of nothing; for that then it might return to nothing, and

\* Ib. vol. i. p. 309. † Stanley by Le Clerc, p. 175.

‡ *Necessity of Revelation*, vol. ii. p. 295. § P.38, 39.

there-

therefore they commonly began with proving its pre-existence, proceeding from thence to prove its permanency after death. And Cicero says, that it was a principle universally acknowledged, that whatever is born, and has a beginning, must also have an end.

Dicæarchus, says Cicero \*, wrote three books to prove, that the minds of men are mortal; but in another place, he says, that he maintained, that there was *no soul*. Aristothenes said, that the soul was *harmony*, and Xenocrates, that it was *number*†. And according to him ‡, Pherecydes Syrius was the first that taught, that the minds of men are *sempiternos*, eternal, in which he was followed by his disciple Pythagoras. Pherecydes had that opinion from the East.

Thales (says Cicero, in his *Book of Consolation*) asserted, that Apollo himself declared, that the soul is a *part of a divine substance*, and that it returns to heaven as soon as it is disengaged from this mortal body. All the philosophers of the Italic school were of this sentiment. It was their constant doctrine, that souls descended from heaven, and that they are not only the works of the Divinity, but a participation of his essence §. According to Diogenes Laertius, Thales maintained, that the soul is immortal, because, that from which it

\* Tuf. Quest. p. 64. Ed. Glasg.      † Ib. p. 26, 27.

‡ Ib. p. 38.      § Ramsay, p. 271.

is taken [*αποσπεσται*] is immortal\*. Euripides also (according to Cicero†, held, that the mind was God, and that if God be either *anima*, or *fire*, the same must be the mind of man; or if it be a *fifth substance*, of which Aristotle speaks, it must be the same both with respect to God and the soul.

It is the doctrine of Plato, concerning the soul, that makes the greatest figure of those of the Greek philosophers, and that which the christians have made the most use of. I shall, therefore, give a fuller detail concerning it. He distinguished *three sorts of souls*, differing in purity and perfection, the *universal soul*, those of the stars, and those of *men*‡. Of those he distinguished two parts, the superior, which was an emanation from the Deity himself, and the inferior, which derived its origin from the more spiritual part of matter§. But according to Cicero||, Plato supposed the soul to be *threefold*, and placed reason in the *head*, anger in the *breast*, and desire *subter precordia*.

Plato's account of the cause of the *descent of the soul* has something peculiar in it, but which was not unknown in some of the Oriental systems. Others supposed, that they were condemned to a confinement in these bodies for offences committed in a pre-existent state;

|| Gal's Philosophia Generalis, p. 178.

† Tusc. Quest. p. 56, ‡ Beausobre, vol. ii. p. 362.

§ Ib. vol. i. p. 379. 559. || Tusc. Quest. p. 27.

whereas

whereas he represents their *desire of these mortal bodies* to have been their original sin. He supposed, says Beausobre\*, that souls were touched with a secret desire to unite themselves to bodies, and that this *terrestrial thought* was a weight which dragged them to this lower world. The Essenes, he says, had the same opinion. The following is his poetical account of it from Ramfay †. “ Plato says “ that every soul that follows faithfully the “ sublime law remains pure, and without “ spot; but if it content itself with nectar “ and ambrosia, without following the cha- “ riot of Jupiter, to go and contemplate truth, “ it grows heavy, its wings are broken, it “ falls upon the earth, and enters into a hu- “ man body, more or less base, according as it “ has been more or less elevated; and that it “ is only after ten thousand years that these “ souls are re-united to their principle, their “ wings not growing, and being renewed in “ less time.”

According to the Platonic philosophy, there must be something very corporeal in the composition of the souls of the wicked. Socrates, in the Phædo, says, that the souls of those who minded the body, and its appetites and pleasures, having something in them ponderous and earthy, must, after their departure out of the body; be drawn down to the earth, and hover about the sepulchres, till they enter

\* Vol. ii. p. 332.

† P. 288.

again into bodies suited to their former nature. But that they, who live holy and excellent lives, being freed from those earthly places, as from prisons, ascend to a pure region above the earth, where they dwell; and those of them who were sufficiently purged by philosophy, live all their time without the body, and ascend to still more beautiful habitations \*. In his tenth book of *Laws*, he says, that those who have been guilty of smaller sins, do not sink so deep as others, but wander about near the surface of the region; whereas they that have sinned more frequently, and more heinously, fall into the depth, and into those lower places which are called *Hades* †.

It is generally acknowledged, that there is great uncertainty with respect to the opinion of *Aristotle* on this subject. It is probable, that he was sometimes inclined to the opinion of man having no soul distinct from the body; as when he says, according to *Plutarch*, that sleep is common to the soul as well as the body. But when he speaks of the soul as a substance distinct from the four elements, and makes it to be *a fifth kind of substance*, it should seem that he meant to declare himself to be of the opinion of those who held the soul to be of divine origin, and to be eternal. *Cudworth* says, that it must needs be left doubtful

\* *Leland*, vol. ii. p. 307.

† *Ibid.* p. 313.

whether

whether he acknowledged any thing immortal in us or not\*.

*Cicero*, when he speaks as a philosopher, seems to adopt the sentiments of *Plato* with respect to the soul. He says, *Humanus animus, decerptus ex mente divina, cum nullo alio nisi cum deo ipso (si hoc fas sit dictu) comparari potest*†.

" In all the first book of *Tusculan Questions*," says *Mr. Locke*‡, " where he lays out so much of his reading and reason, there is not one syllable shewing the least thought that the soul was an immaterial substance, but many things directly to the contrary--- That which he seems most to incline to was, that the soul was not at all *elementary*, but was of the same substance with the heavens, which *Aristotle*, to distinguish it from the four elements, and the changeable bodies here below, which he supposes made up of them, called *Quinta Essentia*. In all which there is nothing of immateriality, but quite the contrary."

He adds farther, that " the expressions which drop from him, in several parts of the book, evidently shew that his thoughts went not at all beyond matter. For example, that the souls of excellent men and women ascended into heaven, of others that

\* P. 55.      † *Leland*, vol. ii. p. 326.

‡ *Essay*, vol. p. 160.

" they

“ they remained here on earth : that the soul  
“ is hot, and warms the body : that, as it  
“ leaves the body, it penetrates, and divides,  
“ and breaks through our thick, cloudy, moist  
“ air : that it stops in the region of fire, and  
“ ascends no farther, the equality of warmth  
“ and weight making that its proper place,  
“ where it is nourished, and sustained with  
“ the same things wherewith the stars are  
“ nourished and sustained ; and that by the  
“ conveniency of its neighbourhood it shall  
“ there have a clearer view, and fuller know-  
“ ledge, of the heavenly bodies : that the  
“ soul also, from this height, shall have a  
“ pleasant and fairer prospect of the globe of  
“ the earth, the disposition of whose parts  
“ will then lie before it in one view : that it  
“ is hard to determine what conformation,  
“ size, and place, the soul has in the body :  
“ that it is too subtle to be seen : that it is in  
“ the human body as in a house, or a vessel,  
“ or a receptacle. All which are expressions  
“ that sufficiently indicate that he had not in  
“ his mind separated materiality from the  
“ idea of the soul.” To these remarks of  
Mr. Locke, I will add that, had any such opinion as that of an *immaterial principle*, in the modern sense of the word, been known in the time of Cicero, who has collected and discussed all the opinions of the Greek philosophers on that, as well as on almost every other question of importance, it would certainly have been found in his writings.

It

It is much doubted, however, whether, in reality, Cicero did not give into the Epicurean and atheistical notions of his time; since he expresses himself very much to that purpose in his private letters; and it is remarkable that Cæsar, speaking in open senate, considers all the accounts of what became of men after death as entirely fabulous, and in such a manner as if he well knew he spoke the sentiments of all his hearers.

The *Stoicks* sometimes adopted the common philosophical doctrine, and sometimes departed from it; but upon the whole they may be ranked with those who adopted the principles of the Oriental system on this subject, as well as on several others. Mrs. Carter says, “ they held both superior intelligences, and likewise the souls of men to be a portion of the essence of God, or parts of the soul of the world, and also to be corporeal and perishable. Some of them, indeed, maintained that human souls subsisted after death, but they were, like all other beings, to be consumed at the conflagration. Cleanthes taught that all souls lasted till that time; Chrysippus only those of the good. Seneca is perpetually wavering, sometimes speaking of the soul as immortal, and at others, as perishing with the body; and indeed,” she says, “ there is nothing but confusion, and a melancholy uncertainty to be met with in the Stoicks on this subject\*.”

\* P. 11.

VOL. I.

R

“ M

“ M. Antoninus, on the supposition that  
 “ souls continue after death, makes them to  
 “ remain for some time in the air, and then  
 “ to be changed, diffused, kindled, and re-  
 “ sumed into the productive intelligence of  
 “ the universe. But, in another place, he vin-  
 “ dicates the conduct of providence on the  
 “ hypothesis, that the souls of good men are  
 “ extinguished by death \*.” “ In general,  
 “ however, he holds the language of other  
 “ philosophers on this subject, calling the  
 “ soul, *τοὺς μετόχους Δεοῖς απομοιῆς*, and *απομοίωσις*,  
 “ and *αποσπάσμα τε διος* †. Thus also Seneca,  
 “ *Dei pars est*; and Manilius, *Pars ipse deorum  
 est.*” “ Nothing,” says Mrs. Carter ‡, “ can  
 “ excuse their idolatry of human nature (on  
 “ this supposition) which they proudly and  
 “ inconsistently supposed to be perfect and  
 “ self-sufficient. Seneca carries the matter  
 “ so far as, by an implied antithesis, to give  
 “ his wise man the superiority to God. Even  
 “ Epictetus sometimes informs his readers  
 “ that they are not inferior to the gods.”

Galen declares he was quite ignorant of the nature of the soul, but that he much suspected that it was corporeal.

Hitherto we have certainly found nothing like a proper *immaterial soul*, as it is described by modern metaphysicians; and it is remark-

\* P. 12.

† See Suicer.

‡ P. 17.

§ Leland, vol. ii. p. 281.

able, that when we come to the opinions of the *christian Fathers*, we find that, instead of their ideas being more spiritualized on this subject, they were considerably more gross than those of many of the heathens, as we have seen to have been the case with respect to their opinions concerning the divine essence. But before I recite their opinions, I shall take some notice of those of the Jews.

Presently after the time of our Saviour, and not much, I imagine, before, the more speculative of the Pharisees began to adopt the doctrine of the heathens concerning the soul, as a substance distinct from the body. If we judge by the history of the gospel, we cannot but conclude, that this was not then the common belief. At least Martha, the sister of Lazarus, does not appear to have known any thing of it; nor does it appear from that part of the history, that even the Pharisees in general had adopted it. And though it be said of the Sadducees, so late as the year A.D. 60, as distinguished from the Pharisees \*, that *they say there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit*, it is not certain, that by spirit, (*πνεύμα*) in this place, is meant the soul of a man, especially as it is said of the Pharisees, that they confess *both*, *τὰ αὐτόλεπτα*, as if there had been in fact but *two articles* mentioned before.

\* Acts xxiii. 8.

Nor is it quite certain, that even the opinions of the Pharisees in general, in the time of Josephus, were quite so conformable to the notions of the Greeks as he has represented them. That himself, Philo, and others, had adopted that system is evident enough; but the disposition of Josephus to accommodate his history to the taste of his readers, and his desire to recommend his nation and religion to his masters, are well known.

There can be no doubt, however, but that after the age of Josephus, the philosophizing Jews went into all the depths of Oriental mysticism. Philo Judæus calls the human soul, *αποστατμα*, or *απαντασμα*, from the Deity \*. The Cabalists, as I mentioned before, supposed that spirits are made not from nothing, but from the Holy Ghost; and that spirits produce spirits, as ideas produce ideas †. They also thought that the soul, being an emanation from the Deity, had the power of multiplying itself without end, because every part of the Deity is infinite; so that they believed that all souls were contained in that of Adam, and sinned with him ‡. Like the Greeks, the Jews in general, in the time of Josephus, thought that the place of departed souls was under the earth.

\* Gale's *Philosophia Generalis*, p. 370.

† Beaufobre, vol. i. p. 588. 590. ‡ Ib. vol. ii. p. 288.

## P A R T II.

*The Opinions of the CHRISTIAN FATHERS to  
the sixth Century.*

WE find nothing said by any christian writer concerning the soul before Justin Martyr, who had been a Platonic philosopher, and who, using their language, speaks of souls as emanations from the Deity \*.

But as this doctrine of the high *descent of the soul* has not the least countenance in the scriptures, we soon find that it did not meet with a hearty reception among christians, and that it was abandoned by all who were not peculiarly addicted to philosophy. Irenæus expressly denied the transmigration of souls; he believed that they were immortal only through grace, and maintained that those of the wicked shall cease to be after they shall have been tormented a long time †.

After this time, we find that the doctrine of a direct *materialism* crept into the christian church, and it is not easy to say from what source it came. Possibly, however, those who used this language did not, at first, at least, differ from other philosophers; but considering what their ideas of *spirit* really were,

\* Beaufobre, vol. ii. p. 350.

† Dupin, vol. i. p. 60.

thought (and it was certainly with reason) that the term *body* was more justly applicable to it.

The most determined materialist in christian antiquity is Tertullian, who wrote his treatise, *De Anima*, on purpose to explode the philosophical opinion of the *descent of the soul from heaven*. He maintained, that the soul is formed at the same time with the body, and that as the body produces a body, so the soul produces a soul\*.

To what, says Tertullian, did Christ, when he died, descend? To the souls, I presume, of the patriarchs; but why, if there be no souls under the earth? *If it be not a body, it is nothing*. Incorporality is free from all confinement, from pain or pleasure, Also all the instruments of its pain or pleasure must be body†. The soul of Adam, he says†, came from the breath of God. But what is the breath of God but *vapor, spiritus*?

Arnobius, in opposition to the philosophers, maintained, that it was human vanity that gave the soul a descent from heaven, that it is corporeal and mortal in its own nature; that the souls of the righteous obtain immortality by the divine spirit which Jesus Christ unites to them; but that those of the wicked are to be consumed by fire, and will be annihilated after long torments§.

\* Dupin, vol. i. p. 79.

† Opera, p. 268.

‡ P. 284

§ Beausobre, vol. ii. p. 413.

This writer argues much at large, that the soul is wholly incapable of sensation, or reflection without the body. After supposing the case of a child cut off from all communication with the world, and barely fed, in a hole, without light, he concludes, that he would be destitute of all knowledge, except of the very few ideas that he would necessarily acquire by his senses in that confined situation. And he concludes with saying, Where, then, is that immortal portion of divinity; where is that soul, which enters into the body, so learned and intelligent, and which, with the help of instruction only recollects its former knowledge\*?

Origen says, it was not determined by the church, whether a soul was produced by another soul, whether it be eternal, or created for a certain time; whether it animates the body, or is only confined in it. But himself, being a Platonist, held, that souls had been *from eternity*, that they are sent into bodies as into a prison, for a punishment of their sins†. Of course, he believed the transmigration of souls†. So also did the Cabalists. The Jews, however, limited the transmigrations to three, which they seem to have taken from Plato, who admitted no souls into heaven but those which had distinguished themselves by the practice of virtue in three incorporations§.

\* Opera, p. 34.

† Dupin, vol. i. p. 110.

‡ Beausobre, vol. ii. p. 452.

§ Ib. p. 495

The Manicheans allowed five transmigrations; but the souls of the *elect*, they said, went immediately into heaven\*.

Among the later Fathers, we find three opinions relating to the origin of the soul. First, that souls were created when the body was ready to receive them†; another, that they came from God, and are inclosed in the male seed; another, that the first soul, viz. that of Adam, was made of nothing, and that all the rest came from this by ordinary generation. It was to this opinion that Austin inclined‡.

He was, however, far from being determined in his opinion on this subject, and sometimes expresses himself in such a manner as if he thought the soul to be no *substance*, but only a *property*. He said, that the soul has no *corporeal dimensions*, but that *reason* and the *soul* are one§. He expressly denied, however, that the soul is any *part of God* ||, and says, that God's breathing upon Adam either was his soul, or that which produced it; but he does not determine whether souls are *created daily*, or not.

Before his time, Gregory Nyssenus held, that souls are formed at the same moment with the body; and he first, I believe, made use of an expression which was long retained in the christian schools, and was the source of much

\* Beausobre, p. 499.

† Ib. p. 353.

‡ Ib. p. 354.

§ Dupin, vol. iii. p. 131.

|| P. 161.

metaphysical subtlety, viz. that *the soul is equally in all parts of the body*\*. It was afterwards added more distinctly, that *the whole soul is in every part of the body*.

The opinion of the immateriality of the soul does not seem to have tended to a settlement before the fifth century, when the question seems at length to have been, in a manner, decided by Claudianus Mamertus, a priest of the church of Vienne, whose opinions, and manner of treating the subject, are much commended by Dupin.

In this century, Aeneas Gazœus had maintained, that souls are sensible of nothing without the body†. Gennadius had advanced, that God only is incorporeal‡, and Faustus Regiensis had supported the same opinion more largely, alledging the authority of Jerome and Cassianus, and urging, that the soul is inclosed in the body, that it is in heaven or hell, and consequently *in some place*, and that if it was not in place it would be *every where*, which is true of God only.

It is to this writer that Mamertus replies. But notwithstanding the excessive applause he has met with, it will be seen that his ideas on the subject would not be entirely approved by the more acute metaphysicians of the present age. In his reply to Faustus, he says, That every thing that is incorporeal is not uncreated,

\* Dupin, vol. ii. p. 277,

† Ib. vol. iv. p. 187.

‡ Ib. p. 185,

that

that the volitions of the soul have their *effect* in place, but are not *made* in place; that it has neither length, breadth, nor height, that it is not moved upwards or downwards, or in a circle; that it has neither inward nor outward parts; that it thinks, perceives, and imagines, in *all its substance*; that we may speak of the *quality* of the soul, but no man knows how to express the *quantity* of it. It is neither *extended*, nor *in place* \*.

In some of his expressions we find the peculiar opinions of Descartes. For he says, the soul is not different from the *thoughts*, that the soul is never without thought, for it is *all thought*; and that heaven and hell are not different *places*, but different *conditions* †.

But I question whether any modern metaphysician will think him sufficiently accurate, or indeed, consistent, in saying that the soul is the *life of the body*, that this life is equally in all and in every part of the body, and that therefore the soul is in no place ‡. It seems to have been this confounding of the *soul* and the *life*, which is only a *property*, and not a *substance*, that gave rise to the palpable absurdities of all the schoolmen, who maintained that there was *a whole soul in every part of the body*, and yet that one man had but one soul. And analogous to this is their

\* Dupin, vol. iv. p. 151.

† Ib. p. 152.

‡ Ib. 153.

other paradox concerning God, viz. that he is completely in every possible place.

Mamertus's book is dedicated to Sidonius Apollinaris, who, in return, prefers him to all the writers of his time, as the most able philosopher, and the most learned man that was then among christians. As the compliment he pays him is a very singular one, I shall, for the entertainment of my readers, insert it in the note\*.

### P A R T III.

*The State of Opinions from the Sixth Century to the Time of Descrates.*

THAT we may have a clearer idea of the state of opinions concerning the soul in what are generally called the *dark ages*, I shall note those of the most considerable writers that have fallen into my hands.

Cassio-

\* He says that he was an absolute master of all the sciences, that the purity of his language equalled or surpassed Terence's, Varro's, Pliny's, &c. that he knew how to use the terms of logic eloquently; that his short and concise way of writing contained the most deep learning in a few sentences, and he expressed the greatest truths in a few words; that his style was not swelled with empty hyperboles, and did not degenerate into a contemptible flatness. In fine, he scruples not to compare him with the most eminent philosophers, the most eloquent orators, and the most

Cassiodorus, who flourished in the beginning of the sixth century, in his treatise *De Anima*, in which he professes to bring into one view what was most approved, and best established on the subject, maintains, that the soul has neither length, breadth, nor thickness, that the whole soul is in all its parts (faculties) and that it is of a *fiery nature*. He inclines to the opinion of the *derivation of souls from souls*, because he could not otherwise account for the souls of infants being contaminated with original sin\*.

Gregory the Great, in the sixth century, says †, that the question concerning the *origin of the soul* was much agitated among the Fathers; some maintaining, that it descended

most learned Fathers of the church. He judges, says he, like Pythagoras, he divides like Socrates, he explains like Plato, he puzzles like Aristotle, he delights like Æschines, he stirs up the passions like Demosthenes, he diverts with a pleasing variety like Hortensius, he obviates difficulties like Cethegus, he excites like Curio, he appeases like Fabius, he feigns like Crassus, he dissembles like Cæsar, he advises like Cato, he dissuades like Appius, he persuades like Cicero. And, if we compare him to the Fathers of the church, he instructs like St. Jerom, he overthrows error like Laetantius, he maintains the truth like St. Austin, he elevates himself like St. Hilary, he speaks as fluently and as intelligibly as St. Chrysostom, he reproves like St. Basil, he comforts like St. Gregory Nazianzen, he is copious like Orosius, and as urgent as Ruffinus; he relates a story as well as Eusebius, he excites like St. Eucherius, he stirs up like Paulinus, he supports like St. Ambrose.

\* *Opera*, p. 429.

*Opera*, vol. ii. p. 209.

from Adam, and others, that a soul was given to each individual; and it was acknowledged, that this important question could not be solved in this life. If, says he, the soul be of the substance of Adam, as well as the body, why doth it not die with the body? But if it have another origin, how is it involved in the guilt of Adam's sin? But, as he concludes with saying, that the latter, viz. the doctrine of *original sin*, is certain, and the other, viz. the *mortality of the soul*, is uncertain, he seems inclined to think the soul descended from the soul of Adam, *ex traduce*, and therefore was possibly mortal.

It is very evident, that this writer had a notion that the soul was corporeal, as will be seen by a very curious circumstance in what follows. He considered the souls of saints and martyrs as continuing in or near their dead bodies and relicks. For he says, that, as the life of the soul was discovered by the motion of the body while it was living, so after death its life is manifested by the power of working miracles. But he did not consider the soul as confined to the dead body; for he adds, that many persons, whose minds were purified by faith and prayer, had actually seen souls going out of their bodies when they died; and he relates at large several histories of such souls becoming visible. Among others, he says, that the soul of *Abbot Spes* was seen by all the brothers of his monastery,

monastery, coming out of his mouth in the shape of a dove, and flying up to heaven \*.

As we approach nearer the age of the schoolmen, we find less of materialism, but a language proportionably more unintelligible, though not quite so remote from all conception, as that of our modern metaphysicians.

Damasenus, in the eighth century, says †, that “ *the whole soul is present to the whole body*, and not *part to part*, nor is it contained in the body, but contains it ; as fire contains the red-hot iron, and, living in it, performs its functions.” Though this writer, as we have seen, considered God as not existing in place, we see here that he confines the soul of a man to his body.

From this time the philosophical opinion of the *descent of the soul* was universally abandoned by christians. Agobard, who flourished in the ninth century, considers it as a question decided by divines, that the soul is not *a part of the divine substance*, or nature, and had no being before its union with the body, being created when the body is formed ‡. Fredegaris, in the same century, says, that souls are created in and with the body, though the philosophers asserted the contrary, and Austin doubted it §.

Another doubt, however, continued in this century. For, Rabanus Maurus says, it was

\* *Opera*, vol. ii. p. 209.

† *Opera*, p. 282.

‡ *Dupin*, vol. vii. p. 182.

§ *Ib.* p. 145.

a du-

a dubious question, whether God created the soul to be infused into the body, or whether it was produced from the souls of the father and mother. He maintained that the soul has *no particular figure*, but that it is principally seated in the head \*. Hincmarus, in the same century, says, that the soul does not *move locally*, though it changes its will, and manners †.

Bernard, in the twelfth century, says, that the soul cannot be in corporeal place, for that things incorporeal cannot be measured but by *time* ‡.

Many of the Fathers, we have seen, were of opinion, that the soul is propagated like the body, and that the soul of Adam was an emanation from God. But Peter Lombard condemns those who supposed the soul to be a part of God, and says, that it was created out of nothing §.

My reader must excuse me if, in relating the opinion of the famous schoolman, Thomas Aquinas, I should not make myself perfectly understood. I shall endeavour, however, to make his meaning as intelligible as I well can. He says that the soul is not a body, but the *act of the body*, (*actus corporis*) as heat, which is the principle of warmth; just as the soul, which is the principle of life, is not a

\* Dupin, p. 164.

† Ib. p. 50.

‡ Opera, p. 466.

§ Sententiae, Dist. 17.

body, but the *act* of a body. This looks as if he considered the soul as a mere *property of body*; but treating of the difference between the souls of men and brutes, he says, that the former is *aliquid subsistens*, but the latter was *not subsistens* \*. He acknowledges, however, with all the Aristotelians, that the soul is *the form of the body*†. Since *that by means of which any thing acts, is the form of that to which the operation is attributed* ‡. The whole soul, he says, is in every part of the body, according to the whole of its *perfection and essence*, but not according to the whole of its *power* §. There is but one soul, he says, to one man, discharging the functions of the intellectual, vegetative, and sensitive part ||. In order to explain the mutual action of the soul and body, he says \*\*, that the *contactus virtutis* is opposite to the *contactus qualitatis*, and that body may be touched by what is incorporeal, so that the soul may move the body.

In *Pernumia*, whose treatise of *Natural Philosophy* was printed in 1570, the soul is said ††, to be the *first act, primus actus*, of the body, and that it is so united to the body, that, with respect to its *quantity*, it is *tota in toto, et pars in parte*; but with respect to its *essence*, and all its *faculties*, it is *tota in toto, et tota in qualibet parte*. In the same treatise, the *natural and vital heat* (which he

\* P. 160.

† P. 161.

‡ P. 163.

§ P. 168.

|| P. 165.

\*\* P. 160.

†† Fol. 85.

says is composed of the substance of the *heart*, the most refined (*depuratis*) vapours of the *blood*, and *air* attracted by it) is said \*, to be a middle substance, between the body and the soul.

## P A R T IV.

*The State of Opinions, from the Time of Descartes to the present.*

THUS stood the orthodox faith concerning the soul till the time of Descartes, who introduced quite a new mode of considering the subject, beginning upon new principles; which was by doubting of every thing, and then admitting nothing but what his own consciousness absolutely obliged him to admit. And yet his writings on this subject have been the means of introducing more confusion into it than was ever known before.

The Cartesians considered the Aristotelian doctrine of the soul being *the substantial form of the body*, as inconsistent with its immateriality, and consequently destructive of the doctrine of its immortality †. But, in consequence of separating from the idea of the soul every thing that he was not obliged to admit, Descartes defined the essence of the soul

\* Fol. 91.      † Historical View, p. 17.

to consist in *thinking*, the evident consequence of which is, that the soul is, in fact, nothing but a *property*, and no *substance* at all; and, therefore, notwithstanding his boasting of improving the doctrine of immateriality, he has been considered by some as only a more acute materialist.

It is plain, however, that this was not the case, and his meaning must have been, that there was a *substance* of the soul, and that the property of this substance was to think without intermission, which he maintained. He is, therefore, considered by others, and especially Mr. Bayle, as having first established the true doctrine of an immaterial substance, intirely without extension, or relation to place. And yet I do not see that his idea of the soul could be wholly abstracted from matter, when he supposed that the seat of it was the *pineal gland*. I therefore think that the proper immaterial system is of still later date, but who was the author of it may not be easily discovered. Indeed, nothing was necessary to make the doctrine of the schoolmen a complete system of immaterialism, but the omission of a few positions which were inconsistent with it. But in the same proportion in which we cut off from spirit every property that it was supposed to have in common with matter, we bring it to a state in which it is naturally impossible to act upon matter, or to be acted upon by it.

Male-

Malebranche adopted the system of Descartes, maintaining, that the essence of matter consists in extension, and that of the soul in thinking. He, therefore, said that the soul thinks always, and most of all when it has no consciousness of its thoughts. He is also said to have been the first who brought into vogue the doctrine of *animal spirits*.

The system of Descartes has been generally adopted, but with some improvements, by more modern metaphysicians. I do not, however, find the strict immaterial system in any writer earlier than our Sir Kenelm Digby, who, in his treatise *Of the Soul*\*, considers it as “ the great property of the soul, that “ it is able to move, and to work, without “ being moved or touched ; that it is in no “ place, and yet not absent from any place ; “ that it is also not in time, and not subject “ to it, for though it does consist with time, “ and is while time is, it is not in time.”

To this doctrine Alexander Ross, in his *Philosophical Touchstone* †, very naturally and sensibly replies, “ If the soul be no where, “ it is nothing, and if every where, it is “ God, whose property indeed it is to be “ every where, by his essence, power, and “ providence.”

The good sense of Mr. Locke was evidently staggered at the extravagant positions of the strict immaterialists, though he had not cou-

\* P. 85.

† P. 80.

rage, or consistency, to reject the doctrine altogether. In opposition to them, he maintains largely \*, that spirits are *in place*, and *capable of motion*. He likewise maintained much at large the possibility of thinking being superadded to matter †, and was inclined to

\* *Essay*, vol. i. p. 259.

† So considerable a writer as Mr. Locke, having maintained the *possible materiality* of the soul, I cannot satisfy myself without giving my reader, in this note, an idea of his manner of considering the subject, by bringing together his most striking arguments :

“ We have ideas of *matter* and *thinking*, but possibly  
 “ shall never be able to know whether any mere material  
 “ being thinks or no; it being impossible for us, by the  
 “ contemplation of our own ideas, without revelation, to  
 “ discover whether omnipotency has not given to some  
 “ systems of matter, fitly disposed, a power to perceive and  
 “ think; or else joined and fixed to matter, so disposed,  
 “ a thinking immaterial substance: it being, in respect of  
 “ our notions, not much more remote from our com-  
 “ prehension, to conceive that God can, if he pleases,  
 “ superadd to matter a faculty of thinking, than that he  
 “ should superadd to it another substance with the faculty  
 “ of thinking; since we know not wherein thinking con-  
 “ sists, nor to what sort of substance the Almighty has  
 “ been pleased to give that power, which cannot be in any  
 “ created being but merely by the good pleasure and  
 “ bounty of the Creator.” *Essay*, vol. ii. p. 167.

This position he defends and illustrates very largely, in his letter to the Bishop of Worcester, some of the most remarkable passages of which I shall subjoin.

“ You cannot *conceive* how an extended solid substance  
 “ should think, therefore God cannot make it think. Can  
 “ you conceive how your own soul, or any substance thinks?  
 “ You find, indeed, that you *do* think, but I want to be  
 “ told how the action of thinking is performed. This, I  
 “ confess, is beyond my conception.” *Ibid.* p. 146.

“ You

to be of opinion, that the souls of men are only in part immaterial. It is worth our

“ You cannot conceive how a solid substance should ever be able to move itself. And as little, say I, are you able to conceive how a created unsolid substance should move itself. But there may be something in an immaterial substance that you do not know. I grant it, and in a *material* one too. For example, gravitation of matter towards matter inevitably shows that there is something in matter that we do not understand, unless we can conceive *self-motion* in matter, or an inexcitable and inconceivable *attraction* in matter, at immense and incomprehensible distances.” Ib. p. 147.

“ The gravitation of matter towards matter, by ways inconceivable to me, is not only a demonstration that God can, if he pleases, put into bodies powers and ways of operation above what can be derived from our ideas of body, or can be explained by what we know of matter, but also an unquestionable and every where visible instance that he has done so.” P. 149.

“ When you can make it conceivable how any created finite dependent substance can move itself, or alter or stop its own motion (which it must to be a free agent) I suppose you will find it no harder for God to bestow this power on a solid, than an unsolid created substance.” P. 166.

“ He that considers how hardly sensation is, in our thought, reconcileable to matter” (it must be remembered that Mr. Locke thought brutes to be wholly material) “ or existence to any thing that has not extension at all, will confess that he is very far from knowing what his soul is. It is a point which seems to me to be put out of the reach of our knowledge. And he who will give himself leave to consider freely, and look into the dark and intricate part of each hypothesis, will scarcely find his reason able to determine him fixedly for or against the soul’s materiality.” P. 168.

“ consideration, says he \*, whether active  
 “ power be not the proper attribute of spi-  
 “ rits, and passive power of matter. Hence  
 “ it may be conjectured, that created spirits  
 “ are not totally separate from matter, be-  
 “ cause they are both active and passive. Pure  
 “ spirit, viz. God, is only active, pure  
 “ matter is only passive; those beings that  
 “ are both active and passive we may judge to  
 “ partake of both.”

I cannot help thinking that he who could maintain these positions, viz. that spirits exist *in place*, and have proper *loco-motion*, that matter *may be made to think*, that the souls of men are probably *in part material*, and also that the *souls of brutes are not immortal*, was not far from a proper materialism; and that to have been consistent with himself, he certainly ought to have declared for it without regarding vulgar prejudices.

Indeed, the tendency of these principles to materialism was so evident, that almost all the subsequent defenders of the immateriality and natural immortality of the soul have disclaimed them. Among others, Dr. Watts has most clearly and largely proved †, that the necessary consequence of admitting spirits to exist in space, and to be capable of a proper motion from one place to another, is that they must have proper extension, figure, and a corporeal substance.

\* *Essay*, vol. i. p. 264. † *Philosophical Essays*, p. 133, &c.

“ With

“ With regard to conscious beings, whether created or uncreated,” he says\*, “ I confess I have no clear idea how they can have any proper locality, residence, situation, nearness, or juxtaposition among bodies, without changing the very essence or nature of them into extended beings, and making them quite other things than they are. When we say that God, the infinite spirit, is *every where*, in a strict philosophical sense, we mean that he has an immediate and unlimited consciousness of, and agency upon, all things, and that his knowledge and power reach also to all possibles, as well as to all actual beings. When we say the soul of man is *in his body*, we mean he has a consciousness of certain motions and impressions made on that particular animal engine, and can excite particular motions in it at pleasure.”

This being the only consistent system of immaterialism, it is that which is held by Mr. Baxter, and all the most approved modern writers upon the subject.

From the whole of this section, and the preceding, it will appear, that the modern idea of an *immaterial being* is by no means the same thing that was so denominated by the ancients; it being well known to the learned, as has been shewn, that what the ancients meant by an immaterial being, was only a

\* Ibid, p. 381.

*finer kind* of what we should now call *matter*, something like *air* or *breath*, which first supplied a name for the *soul*, or else like *fire* or *flame*, which was probably suggested by the consideration of the *warmth* of the living body. Consequently, the ancients did not exclude from mind the property of *extension*, and *local presence*. It had, in their idea, some common properties with matter, was capable of being united to it, of acting and being acted upon by it, and of moving from place to place along with it.

But it was justly considered by the moderns, that such an immaterial substance as this was, in fact, no immaterial substance at all, but a material one; it being the opinion of all modern philosophers (though it was unknown to the ancients) that all matter is ultimately the same thing, all kinds of bodies differing from one another only in the *size* or *arrangement* of their ultimate particles, or atoms. It was, therefore, seen, that if the powers of sensation or thought could belong to such a material substance as the ancients had denominated an immaterial one (being only an attenuated kind of matter) it might be imparted to the very *grossest* matter; since it is naturally capable of the same attenuation; and, therefore, that the *soul* and *body*, being in reality the same kind of substance, must die together.

To avoid this conclusion, of which divines entertained a very unreasonable dread, they

they refined upon the former notion of spirit, excluding from it every property which it held in common with matter; making it, in the strict metaphysical sense of the term, an *immaterial thing*, without extension, that is, occupying no portion of space, and therefore bearing no relation to it; and consequently incapable of motion from one place to another. In fact, there was no other method of keeping clear of a proper *materialism*. For there can be no medium between absolute materialism, and this proper and strict immaterialism. Now, what I maintain is, that this dread of materialism has driven these refiners among the moderns, to adopt a system with respect to human nature, that is not only contradicted by fact and experience, as I think has been fully proved, but is likewise absurd and impossible in itself. For, by denying to spirit every property in common with matter, it necessarily makes them incapable of *mutual action* or *influence*; in consequence of which, it will be naturally impossible, that the divine mind should either have *created matter*, or be capable of *acting upon it*.

After the deduction that I have given of the history of opinions concerning the soul, it may be useful to give a summary view of the whole, that the several steps in the progress, and their natural connexion, may more easily appear.

Man is a being possessed of various faculties, or powers. He can *see, hear, smell, feel, walk, think,*

*think*; and *speak*. He is also a very complex being, consisting of various distinct parts, some of which are evidently appropriated to some of these powers, and others to others of them. Thus it is the eye only that sees, the ear that hears, the nose that smells, the feet that walk, and the tongue is of principal use in modulating the voice. What it is in man that *thinks* is not so obvious, and the opinions concerning it have been various. I apprehend, however, that it was always supposed to be something *within* a man, and not any part that was conspicuous.

The writers of the Old Testament seem to have conceived of it variously, sometimes referring it to the *heart*, perhaps as the most central part of man, as when the Psalmist says, *My heart is inditing a good matter, &c.* but at other times to the *reins*, as *My reins instruct me in the night season*. The *passions* are generally seated by them in the heart, but the sentiments of pity and commiseration are more frequently assigned to the *bowels*, which are said to yearn over an object of distress. It is remarkable, that the *head*, or *brain*, never seems to have been considered by them as having any thing to do in the business of thinking, or in any mental affection whatever. But the reason of it may be, that strong mental affections were sooner observed to affect the heart, reins, and bowels, than the head.

In ancient times the simple power of *life* was generally thought to be in the *breath*, or *animal*

mal heat, because breathing and warmth are the universal concomitants of life. I do not, however, recollect that the latter idea ever occurs in the scriptures, but there life is sometimes said to be in the *blood*.

When men reflected a little farther, and began to conceive that possibly both the property of *life*, and also all the powers that we term *mental*, might belong to the same thing, the breath (the supposed principle of life) was imagined to be competent to the whole; and then the idea of a *soul* was completely formed. Consequently, it was first conceived to be an aerial, or an igneous substance, which animates the body during life, and makes its escape at death; after which it was supposed to be either detained near the place where the body was deposited, being held by a kind of attraction, or an affection to its former companion, or to rise in the atmosphere to a region in which it was counterpoised by the surrounding elements.

We may smile at the ignorance of mankind in early ages, in supposing that the *breath of life* could be any thing more than part of the common air, which was first inspired, and then expired. But though this be a thing well known in the present age, I can easily conceive that, when the nature of air and respiration were little understood, men might not immediately conceive that the breath, though it mixed with the air, and was invisible, was therefore the very same thing with it.

it. They might well enough imagine that it was something distinct from it, which was in part drawn in and out during the continuance of life, and wholly discharged and set loose at death. There are other instances of the ignorance of the ancients in matters of philosophy, and even in tolerably enlightened ages, almost, if not altogether, as gross as this.

When, at length, it was discovered that the breath was nothing more than the air, still the idea of an *invisible principle of life and thought* being once fixed, would not be immediately exploded, but would be supposed to be a substance more attenuated, and refined ; as being, for instance, of an *ethereal* or *fiery* nature, &c. still invisible, and more active.

Whatever was the invisible substance of which the human soul consisted, the *universal soul* of the heathen philosophers, or the *divine essence*, was supposed to be the very same ; and all other souls were supposed to have been parts of it, to have been detached from it, and to be finally resumed into it again. In this state of opinions, therefore, the soul was supposed to be what we should now call *an attenuated kind of matter*, capable of division, as all other matter is.

This was the notion adopted by the christian Fathers from the Oriental and Platonic systems of philosophy, and therefore many of these Fathers did not scruple to assert that the soul, though conceived to be a thing distinct from

from the body, was properly *corporeal*, and even *naturally mortal*. The opinion, however, of its being naturally immortal gained ground; and, *matter*, according to the philosophical system, being considered as a thing that was necessarily *perishable*, as well as *impure*, the doctrine of the immateriality, as well as of the immortality of the soul, was pretty firmly established; an immaterial substance being, however, still considered as only something more refined than gross matter.

The idea of the soul being immaterial soon led to the idea of its not having any property in common with gross matter, and in time with matter strictly considered; and being confounded with, and illustrated by, the idea of the *principle of life*, it was asserted to have no length, breadth, or thickness, which are properties peculiar to matter; to be *indivisible* also, and finally *not to exist in space*. This was the idea that generally prevailed after the time of Mamertus, though various other refinements occur in the writings of the schoolmen upon the subject.

But the doctrine of *pure spiritualism* was not firmly established before Descartes, who, considering extension as the essence of matter, made the want of extension the distinguishing property of mind or spirit. Upon this idea was built the immaterial system in its state of greatest refinement, when the soul was defined to be *immortal, indivisible, indiscerpible, unextended*, and to have nothing to do with

*locality*

locality or *motion*, but to be a substance possessed of the simple powers of thought, and to have nothing more than an arbitrary connexion with an organized system of matter.

This was the idea of mind or spirit that was prevalent about the time of Mr. Locke, who contributed greatly to lower it, by contending, that whatever exists must exist *somewhere*, or in *some place*, and by shewing that, for any thing that we know to the contrary, the power of thought may be superadded by the Divine Being to an organized system of mere matter, though, at the same time, declaring himself in favour of the notion of a separate soul. From this time, the doctrine of the nature of the soul has been fluctuating and various; some still maintaining that it has no property whatever in common with matter, and bears no relation to space, whereas, others say, that it exists in space, and occupies a portion of it, so as to be properly extended, but not to have solidity, which they make to be the property that distinguishes it from matter.

The object of this work is to prove, that the doctrine of a *soul* is altogether unphilosophical, and unscriptural; for that, judging from the phenomena, all the powers of *the same being*, viz. *man*, ought to be referred to *one substance*, which, therefore, must necessarily be *the body*, and that the refined and proper spiritualism above described is peculiarly chimerical and absurd. Absurd, however, as is the notion of a substance which has *no property*

property in common with matter, which bears no relation to space, and yet both acts upon body, and is acted upon by it, it is the doctrine that, in the course of gradual refinement, philosophers and divines were necessarily brought to, and is the only consistent immaterialism. For every other opinion concerning spirit makes it to be, in fact, the same thing with matter ; at least every other opinion is liable to objections similar to those which lie against the notion of a soul properly material.

## SECTION XXI.

*A brief History of Opinions, concerning the STATE OF THE DEAD.*

AFTER reciting the foregoing series of opinions concerning the soul in general, it may not be amiss to consider by itself what has been thought concerning its condition between the death of the body and the resurrection. And the revolution of opinions, with respect to this question, has been not a little remarkable.

It was unquestionably the opinion of the apostles and early christians, that whatever be the nature of the soul, its percipient and thinking powers cease at death ; and they had no hope of the restoration of those powers, but in the general resurrection of the dead. But when it was concluded that men had souls

distinct

distinct from the body, and capable of subsisting after the body was dead, it was necessary to provide some *receptacle* for them, where they might wait till they were re-united to their respective bodies.

Before the council of Florence, which was held in the year 1439, under Pope Eugenius IV. the current doctrine both of the Greek and Latin churches was, that the souls of the saints were in *abditis receptaculis*, or, as some of them expressed it, in *exterioribus atriis*, where they expected the resurrection of their bodies, and their complete glorification; and though the Fathers believed all of them to be happy, yet they did not think they would enjoy the *beatific vision* before the resurrection \*. How the souls of the wicked were disposed of, little or nothing is said by them.

The catholics, as well as heretics, says Beausobre †, believed that the souls of the Old Testament saints were kept in prison *in the shades below*, and could not be delivered from thence but by the grace of Christ. Christ, they say, when he was in a state of death, went and preached to them, and brought from thence as many as believed in him. Irenæus maintained this opinion ‡.

That the genuine christian doctrine, of the *sleep of the whole man* till the resurrection, did

\* Historical View, p. 1. † Vol. i. p. 290.

‡ Dupin, vol. i. p. 60.

however, continue in the christian church, and especially among those who had little intercourse with philosophers, there is sufficient evidence. Dupin says, that under the reign of Philip, an assembly of bishops was held on the account of some Arabians, who maintained that the souls of men died, and were raised again with their bodies, and that Origen convinced them of their mistake \*. He also says, that Tatian was of the same opinion with those Arabians †.

It will be more satisfactory to my readers, if, besides this general account, I quote more particularly the sentiments of some of the christian writers upon this subject. I shall, therefore, relate what is said by a few of those of the middle ages, when the opinion began to change.

Gregory the Great, says †, that the souls of some of the righteous, on account of their imperfections, are not immediately admitted to heaven, though others certainly are. But, he says, the souls of all the wicked are tormented in hell; and he explains how, like the soul of the rich man in the gospel, and of the devils, they may be tormented with corporeal fire, though they themselves be incorporeal.

Julian of Toledo, also, in the seventh century, maintained, that the souls of the wicked, immediately after death, are pre-

\* Vol. i. p. 99. † Ib. p. 55. ‡ Opera, vol. i. p. 39.

pitated into hell, where they undergo endless torments\*.

Anselm says †, that the souls of good men do not enjoy perfect happiness till they be re-united to their bodies; and that even then they could not be perfectly happy, if this union impeded their *velocity*, in instantly conveying themselves from one place to another, even the most distant; in which, he says, part of their perfection will consist.

Bernard asserts ‡, that, at the resurrection, the soul recovers its *life* and *sense*; that is, its *knowledge*, and *love*. But he says §, that the souls of the *martyrs*, when loosed from their bodies, are immersed in a sea of eternal light. This, however, was peculiar to the martyrs, and not the necessary privilege of all the departed souls of good men. Again, he says ||, that the souls of the just go to rest at death, but not to the *full glory of their kingdom*; and \*\*, that though they drink of happiness, they are not intoxicated.

He hardly seems to think that the wicked suffered any thing in the intermediate state. For he says ††, that white robes are given to the saints, in which to wait till the wicked are punished, and themselves are crowned with double happiness.

In this state continued the doctrine concerning the dead, through the greatest part of

\* Dupin, vol. vi. p. 44. † Opera, vol. iii. p. 146.

‡ Opera, p. 481. § P. 954 || P. 290.

\*\* P. 1716, K. †† Ib.

the dark ages, between the christian Fathers and the Reformation. It seems, however, that the opinion of the admission of the souls of the righteous to a state of perfect happiness in heaven, had gradually gained ground, and had become the general opinion in the fourteenth century. For Pope John XXII. made himself very obnoxious by reviving, as it is said by Dupin, the opinion of the ancient Fathers, that the souls of good men do not enjoy the beatific vision till the day of judgment. He was very strenuous in asserting and preaching this doctrine, contrary to the judgment of the divines at Paris, whom the king of France assembled for that purpose. But it is said that, on his death-bed, he retracted his opinion, and acknowledged that souls, separated from the body, which are purged from their sins, are in the kingdom of heaven, and in paradise with Jesus Christ, and in the company of the angels ; that they see God face to face, and the Divine essence, as clearly as the state and condition of a soul separated from the body will permit \*.

His successor, Benedict XII. made a solemn decree against the opinion of his predecessor †. But probably the opinion of Innocent had many adherents, since it was thought necessary, a considerable time afterwards, to bring a decree of a council in aid of the contrary doctrine ; and, it is remarkable, that it

\* Dupin, vol. xii. p. 28.

† Ib. p. 29.

was by the authority of a pope, who was obliged to use great art and address to gain his point, that the present faith of all protestant churches on this article was properly established.

In a council summoned by Eugenius IV. to meet at Ferrara, and adjourned to Florence, it was decreed, that the souls of those who, after baptism, have incurred no stain of sin, as also the souls of those, who having contracted the stain of sin, whether in their bodies, or divested of their bodies, have been purged by the sacrifice of the mass, prayers, and alms, are received into heaven immediately, and clearly behold the triune God as he is\*.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which implies, that of its separate existence after death, being denied by many of that age, especially by the disciples of Averroes, and other Arabian philosophers (who maintained one *universal soul*, the derivation of all other souls from it, and their absorption into it) it was thought necessary to reinforce the belief of it in another council. Accordingly, in the Lateran council, held by Leo X. in 1513, it was decreed, that the soul is not only truly, and of itself, and essentially *the form of the human body* (as it is expressed in the canon of Pope Clement V. published in the general council of Vienne) but likewise *immortal*, and according to the number of bodies into which

\* Historical View, p. 2.

it is infused, is singularly multiplicable, multiplied, and to be multiplied (*multiplicabilis, multiplicata, et multiplicanda*\*). This certainly implies the generation of souls from souls, contrary to the decision of Damascenus mentioned above.

Pomponatius, a philosopher of Mantua, not at all intimidated by the Lateran thunder, published a book in the year 1516, on the immortality of the soul; in which he exposed the futility of that argumentation by which the followers of Aristotle had endeavoured to prove the immortality of the soul, on the principles of their master, by shewing, that they either mistook the sense of Aristotle's principles, or drew wrong conclusions from them. He then examines the hypothesis of Aristotle himself, and shews, that the mortality of the soul may be as easily proved by it as the contrary. After all this, he states the moral arguments for the immortality, or rather against the mortality of the soul, under eight heads; and having shewn, that they are weak and inconclusive, he infers, upon the whole, in his last chapter, that the immortality of the soul being a problematical question, we can have no assurance of the thing but from Revelation; and that they who would build immortality upon any other foundation, only verify the character given to certain self-sufficient reasoners by the apostle, namely,

\* Historical View, p. 6.

that *professing themselves wise they became fools*\*.

Though this doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as a substance distinct from the body, is manifestly favourable to popery, but few of the Protestants appear to have had strength of mind to call it in question. Luther, however, did it, though the opposition almost died with him. In the defence of his propositions (in 1520) which had been condemned by a bull of Leo X. he ranks the opinion of the *natural immortality of the soul*, and that of the soul being *the substantial form of the body*, among the monstrous opinions to be found in the *Roman dunghills of decretals*; and he afterwards made use of the doctrine of *the sleep of the soul*, as a confutation of purgatory and saint worship, and he continued in that belief to the last moment of his life †. William Tyndale also, the famous translator of the Bible into English, in defending Luther's doctrines against Sir Thomas More's objections, considers the sleep of the soul as the doctrine of the Protestants in his time, and founded on the scriptures ‡.

Calvin, however, violently opposed this doctrine; and this seems to have given a different turn to the sentiments of the reformed in general, and Tyndale himself recanted his opinion. Calvin seems to have been embar-

\* Historical View, p. 8.

† Ib. p. 15.

‡ Ib. p. 16.

rafted with the souls of the wicked. He says, it is nothing to him what becomes of their souls, that he would only be responsible for the faithful \*. But it appears from Calvin's own writings, that *thousands* of the reformers were of a different opinion from him; and though the doctrine of the immortality of the soul be exhibited in all the present protestant confessions of faith, there is little or nothing of it in the earliest of them.

After the long prevalence of the doctrine of the *intermediate state*, that of the *sleep of the soul* has of late years been revived, and gains ground, not so much from considerations of philosophy, as from a closer attention to the sense of the scriptures. No person has done more in this way than the present excellent bishop of Carlisle. Very important service has also been done to the same cause by the author of the *Historical View of this controversy*, from which much of this section is extracted. Upon the whole, the doctrine of an intermediate state is now retained by few who have the character of thinking with freedom and liberality in other respects. And the more attention is given to the subject in a philosophical light, the better founded, I doubt not, will the conclusions that have been drawn from the study of the scriptures appear to be.

It has not, however, been considered how much the doctrine of the *insensible state of the*

\* *Historical View*, p. 25.

*soul* in death affects the doctrine of the *separate existence of the soul*, which it appears to me to do very materially. It certainly takes away all the *use* of the doctrine, and therefore should leave us more at liberty from any prejudice in the discussion of the question, since nothing is really gained by its being decided either way. Though we should have a soul, yet while it is in a state of *utter insensibility*, it is, in fact, as much *dead*, as the body itself while it continues in a state of death. Our calling it a state of *sleep*, is only giving another and softer term to the same thing; for our *ideas* of the state itself are precisely the same, by whatever name we please to call it. I flatter myself, however, that in time christians will get over this, as well as other prejudices; and, thinking with more respect of *matter*, as the creation of God, may think it capable of being endued with all the powers of which we are conscious, without having recourse to a principle, which, in the most favourable view of the subject, accords but ill with what matter has been conceived to be.

SECTION

## SECTION XXII.

*An Account of Opinions concerning the SENS-  
TIENT PRINCIPLE IN BRUTES.*

THE souls of brutes, which have very much embarrassed the modern systems, occasioned no difficulty whatever in that of the ancients. They considered all souls as originally the same, in whatever bodies they might happen to be confined. To-day it might be that of a man, to-morrow, that of a horse, then that of a man again, and lastly, be absorbed into the universal soul, from which it proceeded\*.

But christianity made a great difference between men and brutes. To the former a happy immortality was promised, and in such a manner as made it impossible to think that brutes could have any title to it. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, to make a change in the former uniform and comprehensive system; and though some philosophical chris-

\* It was consistent, however, with this hypothesis, to suppose, that while souls were confined to the bodies of brutes, their faculties should differ, with respect to their exercise, from those of men. Thus Aristotle bestowed *sensation, memory, and the passions* on the other animals, and *reason* on man exclusively. On this principle the schoolmen, and all the Peripateticks proceeded. *Bolingbrooke's Works*, vol. iii. p. 539.

tians still retained the doctrine of transmigration, it was generally given up, notwithstanding the doctrines of *pre-existence*, and of a *separate consciousness after death*, which were originally parts of the same system, continued.

To account for the great difference which christianity made between the future state of men and brutes, and yet retain the separate state of the soul, it was necessary to find some *specific difference* between them. But a most unhappy one was pitched upon, one that is contradicted by every appearance. It has, however, been so necessary to the rest of the now *disjointed system*, that notwithstanding this circumstance, it has maintained its ground, in some sort, to this day. It is that, though the soul of a man is immortal, that of a brute is not ; and yet, it is evident, that brutes have the rudiments of all our faculties, without exception ; so that they differ from us in *degree* only, and not in *kind*. But the consequence of supposing the soul of a man, and that of a brute to be of the same nature, was absolutely inadmissible ; for they must then, it was thought, have been provided for in a future state as well as our own.

It has been seen, that the Platonists thought there was something corporeal even in the human soul. It is no wonder then that the souls of brutes should have been thought to be *wholly* so, and therefore mortal, which was the opinion, I believe, of all the christian world

world till very lately. Even the great Lord Bacon entertained this opinion. *Anima sensibilis*, says he, *five brutorum, plane substantia corporea censenda est* \*. The celebrated anatomist Willis also professed the same †.

The opinion of Descartes was much more extraordinary, for he made the souls of brutes to be mere *automata*, and his disciples in general denied that they had any perception. Malebranche says, that they eat without pleasure, and cry without pain, that they fear nothing, know nothing; and if they act in such a manner as shews understanding, it is because God, having made them to preserve them, has formed their bodies so as mechanically to avoid whatever might hurt them.

The learned Dr. Gale maintains at large, that the sensitive soul is corporeal ‡; and the very justly celebrated Dr. Cudworth has revived, for the sake of helping this great difficulty, the long-explored notion of the *soul of the world*, from which the souls of brutes issue, and to which he supposes they return, without retaining their separate consciousness after death. “They may, if they please,” says he §, “suppose the souls of brutes, being but so many particular *irritations*, or *effluxes*, from that *life above*, whenever and wheresoever there is any fitly prepared matter capable to receive

\* Gale, p. 326.

† Ib.

‡ Philosophia Generalis, p. 323.

§ P. 45.

“ them,

“ them, and to be actuated by them, to have  
“ a sense and perception of themselves in it,  
“ so long as it continues such. But so soon  
“ as ever those organized bodies of theirs, by  
“ reason of their indisposition, become inca-  
“ pable of being farther acted upon by them,  
“ then to be resumed again, and retracted  
“ back to their original head and fountain.  
“ Since it cannot be doubted, but what creates  
“ any thing out of nothing, or sends it forth  
“ from itself, by free and voluntary eman-  
“ ation, may be able either to retract the same  
“ back again to its original source, or else to  
“ annihilate it at pleasure \*.”

This writer, however, suggests another method of solving this difficulty, much more liberal and rational; supposing the immortality of the soul not to follow necessarily from its immateriality, but from the appointment of God. But he injures the brutes very much, when, to account for the difference in the divine dispensations to them and us, he supposes them to be destitute of *morality* and *liberty* †.

I am most surprised to find Mr. Locke among those who maintain, that, though the souls of men are, in part, at least, immaterial, those of brutes, which resemble men so much, are wholly material. It is evident, however, from the manner in which he expresses himself on the subject, not only that this was his own

\* P. 45.

† P. 45.

opinion,

opinion, but that it was the general opinion of his time. He says \*, “ Though to me “ sensation be comprehended under thinking “ in general, yet I have spoke of sense in brutes “ as distinct from thinking ;—and to say that “ flies and mites have immortal souls, will “ probably be looked on as going a great way “ to serve an hypothesis. Many, however, “ have been compelled by the analogy between “ men and brutes to go thus far. I do not “ see how they can stop short of it.”

It would be endless to recite all the hypotheses that have been framed to explain the difference between brutes and men, with respect to their intellects here, and their fate hereafter. I shall, however, mention that of Mr. Locke, who says, “ This, I think, I may “ be positive in, that the power of *abstraction* “ is not at all in them, and that the having “ of *general ideas* is that which puts a perfect “ distinction between men and brutes. For “ it is evident, we observe no footsteps in “ them of making use of general signs for “ universal ideas, from which we have rea- “ son to imagine that they have not the fa- “ culty of abstracting, or making general “ ideas, since they have no use of words, or “ any general signs †.”

In fact, however, as brutes have the same external senses that we have, they have, of course, all the same *inlets to ideas* that we have ;

\* *Essay*, vol. i. p. 148.

† *Essay*, vol. i. p. 120.

and though, on account of their wanting a sufficient *quantity of brain*, perhaps, chiefly, the combination and association of their ideas cannot be so complex as ours, and therefore they cannot make so great a progress in intellectual improvements, they must necessarily have, *in kind*, every faculty that we are possessed of. Also, since they evidently have *memory*, *passions*, *will*, and *judgment* too, as their actions demonstrate, they must, of course, have the faculty that we call *abstraction*, as well as the rest; though, not having the use of *words*, they cannot communicate their ideas to us. They must, at least, have a natural capacity for what is called *abstraction*, it being nothing more than a particular case of the *association of ideas*, of which, in general, they are certainly possessed as well as ourselves.

Besides, if dogs had no general or abstract ideas, but only such as were appropriated to particular *individual objects*, they could never be taught to distinguish a *man*, as such, a *hare*, as such, or a *partridge*, as such, &c. But their actions shew, that they may be trained to catch hares, set partridges, or *birds* in general, and even attack *men*, as well as to distinguish their own master, and the servants of the family in which they live.

Whether brutes will survive the grave we cannot tell. This depends upon other considerations than their being capable of reason and reflection. If the resurrection be properly *miraculous*, and intirely out of all the established

blished laws of nature, it will appear probable that brutes have no share in it; since we know of no declaration that God has made to that purpose, and they can have no expectation of any such thing. But if the resurrection be, in fact, *within the proper course of nature*, extensively considered, and consequently there be something remaining of every organized body that death does not destroy, there will be reason to conclude, that they will be benefited by it as well as ourselves. And the great misery to which some of them are exposed in this life, may incline us to think, that a merciful and just God will make them some recompence for it hereafter. He is *their* maker and father as well as *ours*. But with respect to this question, we have no sufficient *data* from which to argue, and therefore must acquiesce in our utter ignorance; satisfied that the Maker and Judge of all will do that which is right.



T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINE  
C O N C E R N I N G T H E  
O R I G I N O F T H E S O U L,  
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N A T U R E O F M A T T E R ;  
W I T H I T S  
I N F L U E N C E O N C H R I S T I A N I T Y,  
Especially with respect to the Doctrine of the  
P R E - E X I S T E N C E O F C H R I S T ;  
B E I N G A S E Q U E L T O T H E  
D I S Q U I S I T I O N S C O N C E R N I N G M A T T E R  
A N D S P I R I T .

*We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 PFT. i. 16.

VOL. I.

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## T H E I N T R O D U C T I O N;

*Containing the Outlines of the Philosophical  
Doctrine concerning the Origin of the Souls  
of Men, &c.*

TRUE Religion, which consists in the observance of just precepts for the conduct of life, and of reasonable expectations after death, is necessarily founded on a just knowledge of God, of ourselves, and our situation. But it was naturally impossible that mankind, in the infancy of the world, should attain to just notions on these subjects. It could not be, but that the philosophy of the world around us, and the various substances that compose it, should precede the knowledge of ourselves, and especially the knowledge of God, the maker of all things. And the very slow progress that mankind have made in the true philosophy of the external world, our acquaintance with which is at present but very imperfect, and all the great discoveries recent, is sufficient to convince any person, who knows what philosophy is, and how ready men always are to speculate upon every subject, and to attach themselves

*to general principles*, false as well as true, of what importance it was that the universal parent should make some provision for his offspring in these respects ; by imparting to them that information, which, in their circumstances, it was absolutely impossible they should have acquired. Without this seasonable assistance, very absurd notions would unavoidably have been formed, and foolish and pernicious practices would have been the consequence of them.

It is not from *theory* only, but from unquestionable *facts*, that we are authorised to pronounce in this manner. All authentic history shows us, that when mankind, unfurnished with the rudiments of just previous knowledge, *did* speculate concerning the structure of the world, and the origin of it; concerning their own nature, and future destination, and especially the nature and moral government of God, they *did* adopt the wildest and most extravagant systems imaginable ; and that the religion they thus made for themselves, gave a sanction to such practices as exceedingly debased their natures, and sunk them to the lowest degree of depravity, vice, and wretchedness. That the religions of the heathen world, and especially those of the early ages of mankind, were of this pernicious kind, no person acquainted with history will deny.

It is, likewise, no less evident from history, that it has been owing to the influence of a few

few *fundamental truths*, communicated by God to men, that the mischievous tendency of the various pagan religions has, in fact, been counteracted; and it is from these alone we are to expect the future prevalence of sound knowledge, virtue, and happiness. I do not say, however, that *no* just principles of religion could ever have been formed by men unassisted by revelation, but that this knowledge would have been acquired *very late*, not till error, superstition, and vice, had become too prevalent and inveterate; and some important religious truths, I may venture to say, would never have been acquired at all.

That there is *one God*, who made the world, and all things in it, and who governs it by his providence; who loves virtue, and will reward it; who hates vice, and will punish it; are truths too sublime to have been investigated by human speculation. On the contrary, a various and absurd *polytheism*, leading to the most abominable and horrid rites, was the immediate consequence of the wild, undirected speculations of men concerning the origin of the world. The religion of the Patriarchs and Jews, which alone contained the great truths above-mentioned, was a most seasonable check upon the polytheism of the East, which was of the most flagitious and horrid kind. And it has been owing to christianity, and to nothing else, that the same great and generous principles have now spread into this Western part of

the world, overturning the polytheism that prevailed in it before, and bidding fair, according to the prophecies of the gospel, to diffuse their beneficial influence among all the nations of the world.

The incapacity of mankind, in the early ages of the world, for speculating concerning their own nature, or that of the Divine Being, and therefore the real importance of revelation, is in nothing more conspicuous than in its appearing (now that we are somewhat better prepared to form a judgment concerning these subjects) that the doctrines of revelation only prove to be truly *rational*, and all the ingenious speculations of men, how specious soever, are found to be all chimerical and vain; being contradicted by the appearances of nature.

This is in nothing more evident, than in the doctrine concerning *human nature*. The doctrines of the ancient philosophy on this subject, even those that have been in some measure subservient to the interests of virtue, will by no means stand the test of just reasoning; whereas, the simple doctrine of revelation stands uncontradicted by any natural appearance whatever; and by this means proves its origin from the *God of all truth*.

The doctrine of the scripture is, that God made man of the *dust of the ground*, and by simply animating this organized matter, made him that living, percipient, and intelligent being that he is. According to revelation,

*death*

death is a state of rest and insensibility, and our only, though sure hope of a future life, is founded on the doctrine of the *resurrection of the whole man*, at some distant period; this assurance being sufficiently confirmed to us, both by the evident tokens of a divine commission attending the persons who delivered the doctrine, and especially by the actual resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is more authentically attested than any other fact in history.

On the contrary, the doctrine of philosophy on this subject is, that there are *two distinct principles* in man, a *body*, and a *soul*, the latter of which comes from heaven, and returns to it again, when the body dies; and consequently, that the body is so far from being the *whole man*, that it is very improperly called a part of him; being, in fact, an incumbrance to the percipient and thinking substance, which alone is *himself*; and we only begin to live to purpose, when we are disengaged from these impediments to our highly active powers.

Contrary as this system is to all appearances whatever, as I have shewn at large in the preceding treatise, it has been to an attentive study of the scriptures chiefly, and not so much to the consideration of natural phenomena, that we are indebted for the downfall of it. We there find a total and remarkable silence concerning the *unembodied state of man*. Death is there considered as a state of obli-

vion and insensibility, and it is only at the general resurrection of the human race, that the rewards of virtue, and the punishments of vice, are expressly said to *commence*.

These circumstances are so striking in the system of revelation, that divines (and not philosophers) were first convinced, that, though man has a soul distinct from his body, its powers of perception and action depend upon the body, and that the whole man is in a state of insensibility from death to the resurrection. After this, we discover that natural phenomena intirely favour the same conclusion, and that, had we known nothing of man but what we see of him here, we must necessarily have formed the same judgment; and that death would be followed by the utter extinction of all our percipient and intellectual powers.

This having been the state of opinions for a considerable time, and the soul having served no other purpose but that of an *hypothesis* (being deemed incapable of subsisting, or at least of *acting* by itself) we are encouraged to lay aside all prejudice, and examine whether this hypothesis of a soul, distinct from the body, be favoured by fact and appearances. Finding it not to be favoured by any one fact, or appearance in nature, I have ventured to reject it altogether; and here, and here only, I find a perfect consonancy between the doctrines of Revelation, and the dictates of natural reason,

Having

Having proceeded thus far, I am tempted to extend my views, and consider the whole philosophical system, of which the doctrine of the soul makes a part; endeavouring to trace it from its source, and to shew the mischievous effects that have followed from incorporating a thing of so heterogeneous a nature into the system of Revelation.

The importance of these inquiries must be evident to any person who attends to the progress of knowledge and good sense in the world. For if the general body of christians retain any doctrine as essential to revealed religion, which true philosophy shall prove to be actually false, the consequence will be, that the whole system will be rejected by those who consider that tenet as an inseparable part of it. So greatly doth it behove us, that *christian knowledge* should keep pace with *philosophical*.

A conjecture concerning the origin of the opinion of a *soul distinct from the body* of man was advanced in the preceding treatise. I shall now observe, that after the soul had, for reasons there assigned, been conceived to be of the nature of *air*, or *fire*, to go *above the clouds*, and to *have come down from thence*, all which opinions have an easy connexion, we find the following more extended philosophical system erected on this basis. All accounts prove, that it was first established in the Oriental part of the world, and that it was thence diffused through Europe, but it

was

was held with considerable variations every where.

There have existed from eternity *two principles*, essentially different from, and opposite to each other, *God and matter*; the former an intelligent and perfectly good being, generally compared to *light*, the other the source of all evil, and generally compared to *darkness*. Either from eternity, or in time, there issued from the supreme intelligence various inferior intelligences. This production was by way of *efflux*, or *emanation from himself*, it being an indisputable maxim, that *nothing can come from nothing*. These intelligences occupied the region of light, bounded by that of darkness, which lay below it. The second principle, or matter, was by some represented as wholly inert, but by others it was said to be animated, or to have a peculiar soul.

Some of the inferior intelligences having sinned, and forfeited their rank in the regions of light, were condemned to assume material bodies, several of which they sometimes animated in succession, till by this course of suffering and purgation, they were sufficiently purified from their original stains; after which they were to re-ascend to the regions of light, and be finally absorbed into the supreme mind from which they issued.

For the purpose of forming these material bodies, and preparing a habitable world for their reception, there was a peculiar emanation

tion from the supreme mind, or a *second God*; since the present habitable world, containing a mixture of good and evil, could not come from a being perfectly good. Others, however, supposed, that this peculiar emanation was prior to all others, and co-eternal with the supreme mind.

The most considerable variation in this system respects the *origin of matter*. For some did not suppose it to be eternal, but, like all other things, to have issued directly, or indirectly, from the one great original being, and source of all existence; and, therefore, that this also will, at length, be re-absorbed, and nothing will exist but the Divine Being himself.

The next considerable variation is, that some represent the descent of souls into bodies, to have been at the same time a *sin*, and a *punishment*; those souls having first been smitten with a desire to animate such bodies, for the sake of the corporeal pleasures they might enjoy in them.

Such are the outlines of a system, which, though founded on nothing but *imagination*, without a single *fact*, or appearance in nature to support it, has dazzled and captivated the philosophical part of the world from the earliest ages. And, though the humble *system of revelation* be diametrically opposite to it, in all its parts; representing one God as being *himself* the maker of all things, the author of good and evil, and as having made

made man *of the dust of the earth*, to which he is to return, and from which he is to be raised at last; and though this system of revelation has not failed, wherever it has been received, to overturn the *heathenish system* in part, much of it, however, was unnaturally incorporated into christianity in early times; and there are no small remains of it in the christianity of the present time, both popish and protestant, as will abundantly appear in the course of this work.

Notwithstanding the very general spread of this philosophical system, it is remarkable, that the minds of the Jews were long uncontaminated with it. The doctrine of revelation concerning a future life for man, depends upon *the resurrection of the dead*, and has no other foundation whatever. No other ground of hope is so much as hinted at in any part of the Old or New Testament; and though it is possible, that some of the learned Pharisees in our Saviour's time might have been infected with other notions, borrowed from the Greeks, or from the East, they appear not to have been then known to the *vulgar* among the Jewish nation, as is sufficiently evident from the history of the death and resurrection of Lazarus.

From this valuable history, we find that Martha, the sister of Lazarus, had no hope respecting her brother, but from *the resurrection of the last day*, John xi. 24. and our Lord gives her no consolation but on the same ground.

ground: *I am the resurrection and the life,* Had the notion of a separate soul, released from the fetters of flesh, and enjoying consummate happiness in another life, been known to them, and believed by them, it could not but have been uppermost in their minds; and some mention of it, or some allusion to it, would certainly have been found in the history: whereas no such thing appears.

This belief of a resurrection, as the only foundation of a future life, evidently existing, and being universally received in the time of our Saviour, there can hardly be a doubt, but that it must have been the belief of the most early Jews and Patriarchs. And since this doctrine could never have been suggested by any appearance in nature, it must have been derived from some original revelation, probably prior to the flood.

It is remarkable, that the doctrine of a resurrection appears to have been a part of the religion of the ancient Persians and Chaldeans, as may be seen in Le Clerc's edition of Stanley's *History of the Chaldean Religion*, and Beaufobre's account of the religion of the Magi, in his excellent *History of Manichaeism*; but it seems to have become extinct in time, and to have given place to the more flattering account of the origin of the human soul, and its future destination, mentioned above. For after this, it is remarkable, as all writers acknowledge, that no philosopher

pher admitted any future life but on the supposition that the soul survived the body; or admitted, that the soul survived the body, who did not, at the same time, suppose that it had existed before its union to the body, and who inferred, that it would survive the body from the consideration of its having pre-existed? This, then, was the only ground of hope on the *heathen system*, as opposed to that which revelation holds out to us, and which, though utterly inconsistent with it, has kept its place along with it in almost all our public creeds to this day.

## S E C T I O N I.

### *Of the INDIAN, or the proper ORIENTAL Philosophy.*

IT is in the East, and especially in the empire of Indostan, where the same people, and the same government, continued for many ages, that we are to look for the genuine Oriental philosophy with respect to the soul. We have not only the testimony of all ancient writers, that the system I have mentioned prevailed there, and that from thence it was propagated Westward, but later travellers into those countries give us the most satisfactory information concerning it. It is at this

this very day the reigning religion of the Hindoos, and of a great part of the East; and the attachment of these people to it, is exceeded by nothing but by that of the Jews to theirs.

Ramsay \* informs us, from *Abraham Roger, concerning the religion of the Bramins*, and *Kercher's Sina Illustrata*, that the Bramins believe that souls are an eternal emanation from the Divine essence, or at least that they were produced a long time before the creation of the world; that in this pure state they sinned, and from that time are sent into the bodies of men and beasts, each according to its desert; so that the body which the soul inhabits resembles a chaos or prison. They teach that, after a certain number of transmigrations, all souls are reunited to their original, will enter into the company of the gods, and become divinities.

The Baudistes (says the author of *Examen du Fatalisme* †) a sect of Indian philosophers, say that it is *sensual pleasure* that weighs down the soul, corrupts it, and chains it to matter; so that the soul, in order to recover its natural dignity, must make itself independent of the wants of the body, and be sensible of the deceitfulness of the pleasures it procures. The Baudistes, therefore, convinced of these principles, renounce pleasure, the world, and their fami-

\* Travels of Cyrus, p. 300. † Vol. i. p. 215.

lies, and give themselves up to contemplation, and incredible austerities.

Later travellers have given us much more extensive and exact information concerning the religion of Indostan; and in them we have more particulars of the Oriental system unfolded, so as to leave no doubt but that it was from this source that the Greeks derived their boasted wisdom, and the christians the first taint that was given to their purer principles. Two English travellers have particularly distinguished themselves by their attention to this subject, Mr. Holwell, and Mr. Dow, who, though they differ in some particulars, agree sufficiently in many things, for which I shall quote them.

Mr. Holwell gives his account of the religion of the Hindoos, from the *Chartab Bhade*, which, he says, contains a genuine uncontaminated account of their religion, in opposition to the *Aughtorrah Bhade*, which, he says, is a corruption of it\*. He sums up the whole in the following manner :

“ That there is one God, eternal, omnifick,  
 “ omnipotent, and omniscient ; that God,  
 “ from an impulse of love and goodness, first  
 “ created three angelic persons, to whom he  
 “ gave precedence, though not in equal de-  
 “ gree ; that he afterwards, from the same  
 “ impulse, created an angelic host, whom he  
 “ placed in subjection to *Birmah*, his first

\* Interesting Historical Events, vol. ii. p. 29.

“ created,

“ created, and to Bistnoo, and Sieb, as co-  
“ adjutors to Birmah. God created them all  
“ free, and intended that they should all be  
“ partakers of his glory and beatitude, on  
“ the easy conditions of their acknowledging  
“ him as their Creator, and paying obedience  
“ to him, and to the three primary created  
“ personages whom he had put over them.”

“ In process of time, a larger portion of  
“ the angelic host, at the instigation of Moi-  
“ safoor, and others of their chief leaders,  
“ rebelled, denied the supremacy of their  
“ Creator, and refused obedience to his com-  
“ mands. In consequence, the rebels were  
“ excluded heaven, and the sight of their  
“ Creator, and doomed to languish for ever  
“ in sorrow and darkness. After a time, by  
“ the intercession of the three primary, and  
“ the rest of the faithful angelic beings, God  
“ relented, and placed the delinquents in a  
“ sufferable state of punishment and proba-  
“ tion, with powers to regain their lost hap-  
“ py situation. For that purpose, a new crea-  
“ tion of the visible and invisible worlds  
“ instantaneously took place, destined for the  
“ delinquents.

“ The new creation consisted of fifteen re-  
“ gions, seven below, and seven above the  
“ terraqueous globe, and this globe is the  
“ last, and chief place of punishment, pur-  
“ gation and trial. Mortal bodies were pre-  
“ pared by God for the rebel angels, in which  
“ they were for a space to be imprisoned, and  
VOL. I. X “ subject

" subject to natural and moral evils, more  
 " or less painful, in proportion to their  
 " original guilt; and through which they  
 " were doomed to transmigrate, under eigh-  
 " ty-nine different forms, the last into that  
 " of man, when the powers of the animat-  
 " ing rebel spirits are supposed to be enlар-  
 " ed, equal to the state of their first creation,  
 " The rebel leaders had power given them  
 " of God to enter the eight regions of pu-  
 " nishment and probation, and the faithful  
 " angelic spirits had permission occasionally  
 " to descend to those regions, to guard the  
 " delinquents against the future attempts of  
 " their leaders. Consequently, the souls,  
 " or spirits, which animate every mortal  
 " form are *delinquent angels*, in a state of  
 " punishment, for a lapse from innocence in  
 " a pre-existent state \*."

In this summary the word *creation* is made use of by Mr. Holwell; but in the work from which the summary is made, it is said, that " the eternal One formed the angelic host, in part, of his own essence †." It is also said †, that the rebel angels were driven from heaven into the *Onderab*, or *intense darkness*, the origin of which, not being mentioned, may be supposed to have been from all eternity; and it is no where said in this account, that any thing was made from nothing.

\* Interesting Events, vol. ii. p. 69, &c.

† Ib. p. 35.      † P. 44.

" It

“ It is an established doctrine,” he says\*,  
 “ of the *Aughtorrah Bhade*, that the three  
 “ primary created personages, as well as the  
 “ rest of the heavenly angelic faithful spirits,  
 “ have, from time to time, according to the  
 “ permission given them by God, descended  
 “ to the place of punishment, and have vo-  
 “ luntarily subjected themselves to the feel-  
 “ ings of natural and moral evil for the sake  
 “ of their delinquent brethren.”

These extracts from Mr. Holwell contain a pretty full detail of most of the tenets that I have mentioned in my sketch of the Oriental system. Some other particulars we learn from Mr. Dow.

According to him the *Beda's*, written in the Shanscritt language, are said to have been collected by Beafs, who divided them into four distinct parts, four thousand eight hundred and ninety-four years before 1776 of the christian æra†. “ The Hindoos,” he says, “ are divided into two sects, the followers of “ the doctrine of the *Bedang*, and those who “ adhere to the principles of the *Neadirsen*‡. “ The *Bedang* is an exposition of the doc-“ trine of the *Beda's* by Beafs Muni. It “ was revived some ages after by Serrider “ Swami. Almost all the Hindoos of the “ Decan, and those of the Malabar and Co-

\* P. 71.

† Dissertation prefixed to his History of Hindostan, p. 27.

‡ P. 38.

“ romandel coasts are of the sect of the Be-  
“ dang \*.”

According to the Bedang, “ *affection* dwell-  
“ ed with God from all eternity. It was of  
“ three different kinds, the *creative*, *pre-  
“ serving*, and *destructive*. The first is re-  
“ presented by *Brimba*, the second by *Bishen*,  
“ and the third by *Shibat*. The affection of  
“ God then produced *power*, and power, at  
“ a proper conjunction of time, and fate, em-  
“ braced *goodness*, and produced *matter*. The  
“ three qualities then, acting upon matter,  
“ produced the universe †. According to  
this system, since nothing is said to be made  
out of nothing, matter must have been pro-  
duced by a kind of generation from beings  
whose substance was originally derived from  
God himself, which was agreeable to the  
avowed opinion of the Cabalists.

“ God seeing the earth in full bloom call-  
“ ed forth *intellect*, which he endued with  
“ various organs and shapes, to form a diver-  
“ sity of animals upon the earth. *Intellect*  
“ is a portion of the great *soul of the universe*,  
“ breathed into all creatures, to animate them  
“ for a certain time. After death it animates  
“ other bodies, or returns like a drop into  
“ that unbounded ocean from which it first  
“ rose, which is the case with the souls of  
“ the good. But those of the wicked are  
“ after death immediately clothed with a

\* P. 38.

† P. 41.

“ body

“ body of fire, earth, and akash” (a subtle ethereal matter, from whence the Greeks probably had their notion of the *materia prima*) “ in which they are for a time punished in hell. After this they animate other bodies, and when they are arrived at a state of purity, they are absorbed into God. This absorbed state is a participation of the divine nature, where consciousness is lost in bliss\*.—At length all things will be involved in fire, and the world reduced to ashes. God will then exist alone, for matter will be totally annihilated †.” This doctrine of a *final conflagration* was adopted by the Stoics.

“ The more learned Bramins,” he says ‡, “ maintain that hell is a mere bugbear to terrify the vulgar; for that God has no passion, but benevolence; and men are never punished for their vices, but by the natural consequences of their actions.” This we find to have been the opinion of all the Greek philosophers, without exception.—Such are the doctrines of the Bedang.

The *Neadirſen* is not reckoned so ancient as the Bedang, but is said to have been written by Goutam, near four thousand years ago, and is received as sacred in Bengal, and all the northern provinces of Indostan, but is rejected by the rest §.

\* P. 44.

† P. 45.

‡ P. 50.

§ P. 56.

According to this system, “ the soul is a vital principle, a subtle element, which pervades all things, distinct from organization, and vital motion \*.

“ Five things,” he says, “ must, of necessity be eternal, the first is the *great soul*, which is immaterial and invisible; the second is the *vital soul*, which he supposes to be material, possessed of the following properties, number, quality, motion, contraction, extension, divisibility, perception, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, accidents, and power. Upon the difference of the vital soul from the great soul, the followers of the Bedang and Neadirsen principally differ †. From this vital soul arises all evil ‡.”

It is remarkable, that we find the same difference of opinion among the Greeks, the Stoics maintaining that inferior intelligences are detached from the *supreme mind itself*, and are to be absorbed into it again; whereas other sects make the human soul to be a portion of the *soul of the universe*, a principle distinct from the supreme mind, or to be composed in part of the one, and in part of the other.

“ The third eternal principle is *time*, and duration, the fourth is *space* and *extension*, the fifth is *akash*, a subtle and pure element, which fills up the vacuum of space,

\* P. 58.      † Ibid.      ‡ Ibid.

“ and

“ and is compounded of quantities infinitely  
“ small, indivisible, and perpetual. God,” he  
says, “ can neither make nor unmake these  
“ atoms ; but they are in other respects to-  
“ tally subservient to his pleasure.

“ God, at certain seasons, endues these  
“ atoms with plasticity, by virtue of which  
“ they arrange themselves into the four gross  
“ elements of fire, air, water, and earth.  
“ And these atoms, being from the begin-  
“ ning formed by God into the seeds of all  
“ productions, the vital soul associated with  
“ them ; so that animals and plants of va-  
“ rious kinds were produced upon the face of  
“ the earth. The superiority of man, ac-  
“ cording to this philosophy, consists in the  
“ finer organization of his parts.”

“ The doctrines of transmigration and ab-  
“ sorption into the Deity he holds in com-  
“ mon with others \*.”

“ He maintains, that the world is subject  
“ to successive dissolutions and renovations,  
“ at certain stated periods. He divides these  
“ revolutions into the lesser and the greater.  
“ At the lesser the world will be consumed  
“ by fire, and the elements will be jumbled  
“ together ; and after a certain space of time  
“ they will again resume their former or-  
“ der †.” This, also, was the doctrine of  
some of the Greek sects.—“ These repeated  
“ dissolutions and renovations,” Mr. Dow

\* P. 60.

† P. 66.

says, “ have furnished a most ample field for the invention of the Bramins. Many allegorical systems of creation are, on this account, contained in the Shasters, and it was for this reason that so many different accounts of the cosmogony of the Hindoos have been promulgated in Europe; some travellers adopting one system, and some another \*.”

The doctrine of the restitution of all things is also found farther to the East. F. Longobardi, in his treatise concerning a learned sect in China, observes, that it is a doctrine of theirs, that “ this universe will expire, and all things in it. All things shall return to their first principle, which shall produce another world, after the same manner; and this also ending, another will succeed, and so another without end †.”

The curious reader will be amused with seeing a manifest resemblance between the mythological system of Indostan and that of Greece in several other respects, besides those which I have had occasion to point out.

It appears from the tenets of the early christian heretics, which are universally acknowledged to have been derived from the East, that an opinion was entertained by some of them, that the intelligence employed to make the world became puffed up with pride,

\* P. 66.

† Leland's Necessity of Revelation, vol. ii. p. 286.

and renounced his allegiance to the supreme mind. The following is the account that Mosheim gives of the Oriental system in general, as it was entertained by many about the time of the promulgation of christianity, and which the reader may compare with the preceding accounts.

“ According to the Oriental philosophers, “ the eternal nature, infinitely perfect, and “ infinitely happy, having dwelt from ever- “ lasting in profound solitude, produced at “ length from itself two minds of different “ sexes, which resembled the supreme parent “ in the most perfect manner. From the pro- “ lific union of these two beings arose others, “ which were also followed by succeeding “ generations ; so that, in process of time, a “ celestial family was formed in the *pleroma*. “ This divine progeny being immutable in “ its nature, and above the power of mor- “ tality, was called by the philosophers *æon*. “ How many in number these *æons* were, “ was a point much controverted among the “ Oriental sages.”

“ Beyond the mansions of light lies a rude “ mass of *matter*, agitated by innate, irregular “ motions. One of the celestial natures de- “ scending from the *pleroma*, either by a “ fortuitous impulse, or by the divine mind, “ reduced into order this unseemly mass, “ created men and inferior animals of dif- “ ferent kinds, and corrected its malignity, “ by mixing with it a certain portion of “ divine

“ divine light. This author of the world is  
 “ distinguished from the supreme Deity by  
 “ the name of *demiurge*. His character is a  
 “ compound of shining qualities, and insup-  
 “ portable arrogance. He claims dominion  
 “ over the new world he has formed, as his  
 “ sovereign right, and, excluding the Deity  
 “ from all concern in it, demands from man-  
 “ kind, for himself and associates, divine  
 “ honours \*.”

This was the species of Oriental philosophy adopted by the early Gnostics, who maintained that this imperious demiurge was the god of the Jews, and the author of the law of Moses. And Mosheim says †, that the Platonic philosophy was of some use to Christianity in combating these Gnostics, and asserting, that the maker of the world, though not the supreme mind himself, was a benevolent being.

One practical, and horrid consequence of the notion of *the evil nature of matter*, and of its serving for a clog or prison to the soul, we see in the disposition to mortify the body, which is so prevalent in the East; where the Fakkeers torment themselves in the most shocking manner. The same notions led to the *mortification of the flesh* in those christians that adopted them, viz. fasting, corporal penance, abstinence from marriage, solitude, silence, and various other austeries.

\* Ecclesiastical Hist v. i. p. 72. † Dissertations, p. 19.

## SECTION II.

## Of the Religion of the ancient PERSIANS and CHALDEANS.

OUR knowledge of the religion of the ancient Persians and Chaldeans is very imperfect, for the same reason that our knowledge of that of the Egyptians is so ; the people having been subjugated, their priests dispersed, and no writings of their own having come down to us. But it appears sufficiently from the collections of learned men, that the religion of this part of the world was contained within the same general outlines with the Oriental system above described.

According to Zoroaster, says Beausobre, (in his *History of Manicheism*\*) God, who  
 " is self-existent, before all ages, formed the  
 " world of pure and happy spirits, the same  
 " that the Valentinians called *æons*, the *in-*  
*telligences* of the Platonists, and the *angels*  
 " of the Jews and christians. Three thou-  
 " sand years after he sent his *will*, under the  
 " form of a glorious light, and which ap-  
 " peared in the figure of a man, accompani-  
 " ed by seventy of the most honourable of  
 " the angels. Then were formed the sun,  
 " moon, stars, and men. Three thousand

\* Vol. i. p. 164.

" years

" years after *evil* appeared, when God formed this lower world, bounded by the vortex of the moon, where the empire of evil and of matter ceases. The Magi, he says \*, thought matter animated, and had a power of producing from itself an infinity of beings, partaking of its imperfections. This matter, according to the Magi, lay in the lowest regions †."

It is said by some, that the original Magi believed, that God only was from eternity, and that darkness had been created †. But Zoroaster appears to have held two eternal principles §.

All this sufficiently agrees with the account of the Oriental philosophy of Mr. Stanley, published with many corrections and additions by Le Clerc. From this treatise it appears too, that the doctrines of the *descent* and *transmigration of human souls* was part of this philosophy. The soul, it is said ||, descending from the region of light into this body, if it behave well, returns to the light from which it came; but if it behave ill, it is sent to a still worse situation, according to its desert.

The Chaldeans thought, that there was an intelligent principle in the stars and planets, the latter of which are called *ζωα πλανημένα* in the oracles of Zoroaster \*\*.

\* P. 168.

† P. 175.

‡ P. 170.

§ P. 172.

|| P. 36.

\*\* Le Clerc's Index Philologicus. STELLA.

Some of the Persians thought, that there were two gods, of different natures, the one good, called *Horomazes*, and the other evil, called *Arimanius*, the one resembling *light*, and the other *darkness*; and that in the medium between these was *Mithras*, who was therefore called the *Mediator*\*. This *Mithras* seems to correspond to the *Birmah* of the Hindoos, and the *νοῦς* of Plato; being a peculiar emanation from the Deity, and employed by him in the formation of the world, and, therefore, was supposed by philosophizing christians to be the same with *Christ*.

## SECTION III.

*Of the Introduction of the Oriental Philosophy into GREECE,*

WE may clearly distinguish several periods of philosophy in Greece, the first before they began to speculate much, and while they retained a general idea, derived from tradition, but mixed with many fables, of a God, a providence, and a future state; the second when they began to speculate without much foreign assistance, or neglecting and despising it, when they rejected all belief of a God or future life; the third when they adopted the principles of the Oriental philo-

\* Ib. p. 105,

sophy,

sophy, either in its more imperfect state from Egypt, or when it was more ripened into a system in the remoter parts of the East.

This was the state of philosophy in Greece in its most splendid time, after the age of Socrates, and in this state it continued till near the age of Augustus, when every thing in the whole system that could possibly influence the conduct of men sunk into contempt, and was considered as a pleasing dream. But after the spread of christianity, some of the sects which inculcated a stricter regard to morals, and favoured elevation of soul, as that of Plato, and the Stoicks, were revived. In a much later period succeeded the revival of the Aristotelian philosophy, by the schoolmen, which continued till the time of Descartes.

Of the state of mere *tradition* in Greece we know very little; but of the period of the *atheistical philosophy* we have pretty distinct accounts, as it subsisted long after the introduction of the Oriental, and was often the more prevalent of the two, though even this species of philosophy borrowed something from the Oriental system.

It is expressly asserted by Aristotle, and others, says Mr. Toland \*, that “ the most “ ancient Greek philosophers did not dream “ of any principle, or *actuating spirit* in the “ universe itself, no more than in any of the “ parts thereof; but explained all the phe-“ nomena of nature by matter and local

\* Letters to Serena, p. 22.

“ motion,

" motion, levity and gravity, or the like;  
 " and rejected all that the poets said of God,  
 " dæmons, souls, ghosts, heaven, hell, vi-  
 " sions, prophecies, and miracles, &c. as  
 " fables invented at pleasure, and fictions  
 " to divert their readers."

That the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not of Grecian origin, may be concluded even without historical evidence (of which, however, there is abundance) from the circumstances of the thing; it being always accompanied with other opinions, which were certainly of Oriental extraction. All the philosophers who believed the immortality of the soul, believed its *pre-existence*, thinking it impossible that the soul should subsist after the body, if it had not existed before it; and Lactantius has remarked, that all the ablest Greek Fathers embraced this opinion, and were followed in it by the ablest of the Latins also\*.

The Oriental doctrine was, however, adopted by the Greeks with considerable variations, some of the philosophers holding, that souls were sent into bodies for offences committed in a pre-existent state, but others, by the sovereign will of God†. The opinion of the *evil nature of matter* also appeared in Greece, together with the first idea of a God, the doctrine of two principles being very apparent; and the philosophers, who acknowledged two eternal principles, believed the

\* Beaufobre, vol. ii. p. 330;

† Ib. p. 331.

world not to have been made by God, but by angels, some by good ones, and some by bad\*. And this is no other than the Oriental doctrine.

The first intimation that the Greek philosophers had of the immortality of the soul, they seem to have imported from Egypt, and it was even then accompanied with the doctrine of transmigration. Diodorus says, that Orpheus brought from Egypt the greatest part of the mysterious rites used in Greece, with the *orgies* that are celebrated at their explanation, and the fictions of hell; and he explains particularly those customs which were the foundation of the Grecian notions †. According to Cebes, Orpheus called the body a prison, because the soul is in it in a state of punishment, till it has expiated the faults committed in heaven ‡.

Orpheus, however, was long before the æra of philosophy in Greece, and his history is very uncertain. Of the proper philosophers, both Cicero, and Maximus Tyrius say, that Pherecydes was the first among the Greeks who openly maintained, that the body only died, but that the soul was immortal (*semipernum*) and that he also taught, that it existed before it came hither, so that he must have had his doctrine from the East.

It is rather extraordinary, that Warburton, notwithstanding the express authority of He-

\* Ib. p. 11.

\* Toland's Letters, p. 50.

† Ramsay, p. 282.

rodotus to the contrary, quoted before, and on no ancient authority, but the passage of Cicero above referred to, should maintain \*; that this doctrine was of no other than Gre-  
cian original; when almost all the ancients who speak of Pherecydes, say that he had his doctrine from the East. Hesychius says, that he had no master, but that he instructed himself, after having found some secret writings of the Phenicians. Suidas and Eustathius say the same thing. Homer ex-  
pressly says, that the Phenician vessels fre-  
quented the isle of Scyros, where he lived. Josephus also says, that the first who treated of celestial and divine things among the Greeks, Pherecydes of Scyros, Pythagoras, and Thales, learned their opinions from the Egyptians and Chaldeans. Both Hesychius and Suidas say that Pherecydes first introduc-  
ed the doctrine of the transmigration of souls†.

The next Greek philosopher who taught this doctrine, viz. Pythagoras, besides being the disciple of Pherecydes, is universally ac-  
knowledged to have had it from the East. He conversed with the Chaldean Magi, the In-  
dian Gymnosophists, and particularly with the Egyptian priests; suffering himself to be circumcised, that he might be admitted to the secret doctrines of the latter ‡.

\* Divine Legation, vol. ii. p. 221, &c.

† See a Dissertation by Mr. Heinius in the Memoirs of the Academy of Berlin, vol. iii. p. 210. &c.

‡ Toland's Letters to Serena, p. 31.

“ Pythagoras,” says *Beausobre* \*, “ acknowledged two principles, God and matter, the latter of which he believed to be the cause of all evil. He also taught the doctrine of divine emanations, calling these first intelligences NUMBERS, being the same with the *æons* of the Valentinians, those spirits which are, as it were, the eldest sons of God †. Plato called them *ideas*, or *ενσοι* ‡. The others considered the æons as divine virtues, remaining in the divine essence. The *Sephiroth* of the Cabalists are the same §.”

The Pythagorean philosophy seems not to have spread much in Greece, but to have been confined pretty much to Italy, whither that philosopher retired. For, according to all accounts, the first person who taught the doctrine of a God in Greece, properly so called, was Anaxagoras; who, coming after Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and others, who had taught the universe to be infinite, and matter eternal, though the forms of it were changeable, added *another principle*, which he called *mind*, as that which moved and disposed matter; from which, as being a new thing in Greece, he was surnamed *νοος*.

But this philosophy was not his own discovery. It is said that he also was taught by the Magi, having been twenty years of age

\* Vol. i. p. 33.

† Ib. p. 570.

‡ P. 571.

§ Ib.

at the time of the expedition of Xerxes; and as Dionysius Phalareus relates, he began to philosophize at Athens at those years; and as Theodoret and Ammianus inform us, had travelled likewise into Egypt \*. The Greeks learned several things of the Magi in those days, which afterwards inspired others with the desire of going into those parts for perfecting their knowledge †. Pliny also relates that Osthanes, who accompanied Xerxes in his Grecian expedition, propagated his knowledge wherever he came. *Hic maxime Osthanes ad rabjem, non aviditatem modo scientiae ejus, Græcorum populos egit ‡.*

None of the heads of the Grecian sects made so much account of a future life as Plato, and no philosophical system bears more evident marks of an Oriental origin than his. It is, in fact, the Oriental system itself, with very little variation; no greater, probably, than might have been found in the East at the time that he visited it. Pausanius particularly says, that he learned his doctrine from the Chaldeans and the Indian Magi §.

Plato believed two co-eternal principles, God and matter, and that matter is the source of all evil ||. This he had from Pythagoras, and Pythagoras from the Ma-

\* Toland's Letters, p. 32. † Ib. p. 32.

‡ Hist. Nat. lib. 30. cap. i. § Toland's Letters, p. 32.

|| Beausobre, vol. i. p. 479.

gi\*. He maintained the pre-existence of the soul, and asserted all human souls to be in a lapsed state, wanderers, strangers, and fugitives from heaven; declaring that it was a divine law, that souls finning should fall down into these earthly bodies †. Agreeably to this, Cicero informs us, that he maintained that all *acquired science* was nothing but the recollection of former knowledge.

Without any softening, he frequently calls *souls, god, and part of God, νοῦν αειθεον*. Plutarch says, that Pythagoras and Plato held the soul to be immortal; for that, launching out from the soul of the universe, it returns to its great parent and original. Eusebius expressly says, that Plato held the soul to be ungenerated, and to be derived by way of emanation from the first cause, as being unwilling to allow that it was made out of nothing; which necessarily implies that, according to Plato's doctrine, God was the material cause of the soul, or that the soul was part of his substance †.

This account of the Deity, and the subdivision of his nature by *emanation*, could not have been derived from any other source than the East. But besides the supreme intelligence, and the emanation of human and other souls from it, Plato supposed, agreeably to the Ori-

\* Beaufobre, vol. i. p. 479. † Cudworth, p. 23.

† Divine Legation, vol. ii. p. 28.

ental doctrine, that there was another *peculiar emanation* from him, which he calls *νοῦς*, and also *δημιουρός*; as having been employed in making the world, which world had also a soul peculiar to itself; and this, together with the two higher principles, make a kind of *trinity of minds*. The second person in this trinity is also sometimes called *αὐτοτάτως*, from his producing other beings, and *αὐτοσενήλος*, from being the emanation of the supreme Being \*.

There is, however, something peculiar to the Platonic system, which is, that the world is as ancient as its cause, a mind not being capable of existing without action †, so that the divine emanations were as eternal as himself. This doctrine was of capital use to the christian Fathers, who maintained the *eternal procession* of the Son from the Father, as well as his being of the *same substance* with him. Nor has it been of less use to those Arians, who maintain the *eternal creation* of the Son out of nothing.

“ Aristotle,” says Warburton, “ thought of the soul like the rest, as we learn from a passage quoted by Cudworth, where, having spoken of the *sensitive soul*, and declared it to be mortal, he goes on in this manner. “ It remains that mind, or intellect (pre-existing) enter from without, and be only

\* Cudworth, p. 579. † Beausobre, vol. ii. p. 12.

“ divine. But then he distinguishes again concerning this mind or intellect, and makes it twofold; *agent* and *patient*, the former of which he concluded to be immortal, and the latter corruptible\*.”

As for the Gētes, Celtes, and other northern nations, who held the doctrine of the future existence of the soul, they also held the doctrine of transmigration, and are known to have had both from the Greeks, and the East. Xamolxis, the philosopher of the Getes, and of Thrace, was a servant and disciple of Pythagoras †.

#### S E C T I O N IV.

##### *Of the mixture of the Oriental and Greek Philosophy with CHRISTIANITY.*

THAT the leaven of this Oriental philosophy was mixed with christianity, at a very early period, even in the times of the apostles, all antiquity, and even their own writings, sufficiently testify; and it is far from being wholly purged out even at this day. But whether the first introduction of it was directly from the East, or by the medium of the Greek philosophy, is not quite clear. I

\* Divine Legation, vol. ii p. 211.

† Toland's Letters, p. 42.

rather

rather think from Greece, though not long after, more was introduced than the Greek philosophy could well supply. It happened, however, that by the influence of the Greek philosophers, who embraced christianity, and distinguished themselves as writers, a great deal of that which came by this channel was firmly retained, and became incorporated into the system, while much of that which was derived immediately from the East, being more glaringly inconsistent with the christian principles, was rejected, and those who introduced it were condemned as heretics.

On the first view of things, we are apt to wonder at the propensity of the primitive christians, to adopt a system so utterly repugnant to their own. But it is not more extraordinary than the propensity of the Israelites to idolatry; and both were deceived by very specious reasons, that is, by reasons which could not but appear specious *in their circumstances.*

The Oriental system, besides other flattering allurements, was wonderfully calculated to remove the two great objections that were in those times made to christianity, and at which the minds of men most revolted, viz. the doctrine of a *crucified man* for the founder of their religion, and of a *resurrection from the dead*. The former, we learn from the apostle Paul, was a great stumbling block both to Jews and Gentiles; and at the latter, all the

wise men of Greece absolutely laughed, as a thing utterly incredible.

How ready, then, must those who were dazzled with the *wisdom of this world*, more than with the *true*, but *hidden wisdom of God*, have been to catch at the splendid doctrine of the *emanation of souls from the divine mind*, which was already received in the Gentile world, and to take that opportunity of advancing their master, the too *humble Jesus*, to the high rank of the first and principal emanation of the Deity, the *νοῦς* or *λόγος* of the Platonists, and the *δημιουργός* under God, in making the world.

More effectually to wipe away the *reproach of the cross*, and make their system more coherent, how natural was it to suppose, that this great Being did not really, but only *in appearance* put on *flesh*, and, therefore, did not really suffer and die, but only seemed to do so?

Also, when the philosophers of that age sneered at the doctrine of a *resurrection*, with what pride would these weak christians pretend to equal wisdom and refinement with themselves, by alledging, that the true christian resurrection was not the resurrection of a *vile body of flesh and blood*, which could only be a burden to the soul, but either a *mystical resurrection to a new life*, or indicated the glorious time when the soul, being freed from all its impurities, would join its bright original

ginal, in a vehicle of light, a true spiritual body, and not that carnal one, which had been its punishment here?

Lastly, the doctrine of the *impurity of matter*, has in all ages led to such mortifications, and austerities, as, requiring great resolution and fortitude, have never failed to strike mankind with respect and reverence; giving an idea of an extraordinary degree of abstractionness from the world, and of greatness and elevation of soul.

It is very probable, also, that, as in later times, and also in our own days, persons who pretended to extraordinary purity, more than they really had resolution to keep up to, by exposing themselves to temptations too strong for them, were seduced into lewdness, and other vicious practices; and then found pretences for continuing in them, as not affecting the *mind*, but the *body only*, which is no part of our *proper selves*, and of small consequence in itself. I am led to think so from what we may collect concerning the first christian sectaries in the writings of the apostles, who always speak of great irregularities of conduct, as joined to a departure from the true faith of the gospel. Perhaps their writings might check those enormities, so that those who retained the same general system of principles would afterwards be more upon their guard against such an abuse of them. For it does not appear that the Valentinians, Manichæans, and others also, in later times,  
who

who went the farthest into the Oriental system, were justly reproachable with respect to their lives and manners.

The first trace that we find of any thing like the Oriental system in the New Testament, is in St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, supposed to be written about the year 56. For though the same apostle inculcates the doctrine of a resurrection upon the Thessalonians, in the year 52, what he says upon that subject to them does not imply that they *denied* the doctrine, but only that they had not been well informed concerning it, or had not rightly apprehended it. But what he says to the Corinthians\*, shews, that some among them had absolutely disbelieved the doctrine. Besides, other hints that he drops in the course of the same epistle, shew that their minds had been infected with some specious system of *philosophy*.

Speaking of his own preaching the gospel, he says †, *It was not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For*

\* 1 Cor. 15.

† Ch. i. 17.

after

after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign; and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

It is probable also, from the instructions which the apostle gives concerning virgins, in the seventh chapter of this epistle, that too favourable an idea of *continence*, and *abstinence from marriage* had crept in among them, from the same system.

This epistle appears to have had a great effect. In his second, however, he repeats his cautions with respect to the deceitfulness of worldly wisdom, and he still expresses his fears of their being seduced by it\*. For *I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* But *I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* But *if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not re-*

\* Chap. xi. 2.

ceived,

ceived, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. Now a Jesus not really crucified, might well enough be called another Jesus, one that he had not preached to them, and the gospel of that Jesus, and the spirit of it, would be quite another gospel, and another spirit.

The evil, however, appears by no means to have been stopped by these seasonable and forceable admonitions, at least not in other churches. For in all the epistles written by this apostle from Rome, during his imprisonment there, in the years 61 and 62, we find that this corruption of christianity had risen to a most alarming height; as we see that it excited the strongest expressions of concern and indignation from this truly wise and good apostle.

To the Colossians, he says \*, *This I say lest any man should beguile you with enticing words* †. *Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ* †. *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind, and not holding the head, &c.—which things have, indeed, a shew of wisdom, and will worship, and humility, and neglecting the body, not in any honour*

\* Ch. ii, 4.

† V. 8.

‡ V. 18.

to the satisfying of the flesh. He goes on to say \*, *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God*, in which he might possibly allude to the turn they gave to the doctrine of a resurrection, willing to make some use of their mistake. “ If it be true, as “ you pretend, that the resurrection is past al- “ ready, and you are risen again in the sense “ that Christ really meant, act as becomes “ persons so renewed in mind, and advanced “ to so pure and holy a state.”

But it is in the epistles to Timothy, and Titus, men who had the inspection and care of several churches, that this apostle is most earnest in his admonitions to oppose the progress of this mischievous, but specious philosophy. His first epistle to Timothy begins with this subject, as what was uppermost in his mind †. *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith.* In the fourth chapter he again plainly alludes to the same system of opinions, as what had been foretold should be introduced into the church ‡. *Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and*

\* Ch. iii. 3.

† Ch. i. 3.

‡ Ch. iv. 1.

doctrines

doctrines of *demons*—forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meat, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, of them who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

To the same, no doubt, he refers in the sixth chapter, where, speaking of some who taught otherwise than he had done, he says\*, *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes of words, whence cometh—perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, &c.* And he concludes the epistle with exhorting him, no doubt, with the same view, in the following words: *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith.*

In his second epistle to the same person, he very plainly alludes to the same system, when he says†, *But shun profane and vain babbling, for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker. Of whom is Hymeneus, and Philetus, who con-*

\* V. 3.

† Ch. ii. 16.

cerning

cerning the truth have erred, saying, that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. And as a motive with him to preach the word, and to be instant in season and out of season, he adds\*, For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but, after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables.

In this epistle to Titus we find many expressions very much like those in his epistle to Timothy, and, therefore, they probably allude to the same things; though he here intimates, that they were Jews who were most industrious in propagating these new doctrines, accommodating them to their own Law, as the Cabalists afterwards are known to have done. Mosheim says, " that a considerable number of the Jews had imbibed the errors of the Oriental philosophy, appears evidently both from the books of the New Testament, and from the ancient history of the christian church, and it is also certain that many of the Gnostic sects were founded by Jews †." Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly, and vain talkers, and deceivers,

\* Ch. iv. 3.

† Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 38. Titus, i. 9.

especially

especially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake, Again\*, Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; alluding perhaps to the prohibition of marriage, and of certain meats †. Avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain.

It is not improbable, also, that the apostle Peter alludes to the same system, when he says †, For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty.

But the apostle John, who wrote later than the rest, uses language that cannot be applied to any thing but the system I have mentioned; and it is, moreover, evident from the strain of his writings, that he knew of no other considerable heresy in the church in his time, which agrees with what ancient writers say, that no heresies were known in the times of the apostles, but that of the *Docetæ*, who believed that Christ did not come in real flesh (which is most evidently a branch of the system I have described) and that of the *Nazarenes*, or *Ebionites*, of which I shall say more in its proper place.

\* V. 14.

† Ch. iii. 9.

‡ Ch. i. 16.

To guard against this heresy, which, in fact, subverted the whole gospel, this venerable apostle is very particular in giving a most circumstantial testimony to the proper humanity of Christ \*, *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life.* For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you, that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. *That which we have seen, and heard, declare we unto you, &c.*

It is, moreover, remarkable, that this apostle expressly calls this very doctrine *that of Antichrist*, and he says there were many that published it †. *Little children it is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time ‡.* *Who is a lyar, but he that denieth that Jesus (the man Jesus) is the Christ;* the opinion of some of these sectaries being, that *Christ* was another person than *Jesus*, and that he came down from heaven, and entered into him. *He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.* *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.*

Again §, *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.*

\* 1 John i. 1.    † Ch. ii. 18.    ‡ V. 22.    § Ch. iv. 3.

From which we may clearly learn, that this was the only heresy that gave any alarm to this good apostle. *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.* It is also to the reality of the body of Christ, that he alludes, when he says\*, *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood; for there are three that bear witness, the spirit, and the water, and the blood;* alluding, perhaps, to Jesus being declared to be the Son of God at his baptism, by his miracles, and by his death and resurrection, of which the former was allowed by the Docetæ, but the latter they denied.

In his second epistle, this apostle still dwells upon the same subject †, *Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an Antichrist ‡.* If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor bid him God speed. It is to this also, probably, that he alludes when, in his third epistle, he expresses his joy that Gaius, to whom he writes, *walked in the truth §.* *I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came, and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest*

*in the truth. I have no greater joy than to bear that my children walk in truth.*

Who were the *Nicolaitans*, mentioned in the book of Revelation, is not known with any certainty; but as antiquity mentions no heresies in the church in those early times, but some branch of the Oriental sect, and the Nazarenes, who are falsely considered as heretical, it is probable that the Nicolaitans were some of the more flagitious of the former sort, abusing their tenets to licentious purposes; and perhaps this apostle naming them so expressly, and in terms of such extreme disapprobation, in an epistle from Christ himself, might be a means of extinguishing both the name and the thing.

“ The writers of the second, and of the following centuries,” says Mosheim \*, “ Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement, and others, affirm, that the Nicolaitans adopted the sentiments of the Gnostics concerning two principles of all things, the *œons*, and the origin of the terrestrial globe.”

“ There is no sort of doubt,” says the same writer †, “ but that Cerinthus, another heretic, said to have been cotemporary with the apostle John, may be placed with propriety among the Gnostics. He taught that the Creator of this world, whom he considered also as the sovereign and law-

\* Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 116.

† Ibid, p. 116.

“ giver of the Jewish people, was a Being  
“ endued with the greatest virtues, and de-  
“ rived his birth from the supreme God,  
“ that this Being fell by degrees from his  
“ native virtue, and his primitive dignity ;  
“ that the supreme God, in consequence of  
“ this, determined to destroy his empire,  
“ and sent upon earth for this purpose one  
“ of the ever happy and glorious œons,  
“ whose name was Christ ; that this Christ  
“ chose for his habitation the person of  
“ Jesus, a man of the most illustrious sanc-  
“ tity and justice, the son of Joseph and  
“ Mary ; and descending in the form of a  
“ dove, entered into him while he was re-  
“ ceiving the baptism of John in the wa-  
“ ters of Jordan ; that Jesus, after his union  
“ with Christ, opposed himself with vigour  
“ to the God of the Jews, and was, by  
“ his instigation, seized and crucified by the  
“ Hebrew chiefs ; that when Jesus was taken  
“ captive, Christ ascended up on high, so  
“ that the man Jesus alone was subjected to  
“ the pains of an ignominious death.”

It is to the same Oriental philosophy that, for my part, I have little doubt, that this apostle, who certainly referred to it in his *epistles*, alluded also in the *Introduction to his gospel*, where (in direct opposition to the principles of this philosophy, which supposed, that the *αόστος*, which made the world, was a Being distinct from God) he explains what the word *αόστος*, really means (as when it is said,

said, in the Old Testament, that the *world was made by it*) viz. the *wisdom and power of God himself*, and nothing that was distinct from him. *In the beginning, says he, was the ἀρχή*, as the philosophers also said; but the *ἀρχή, was with God*, that is, it was *God's own ἀρχή*, or *his attribute*, so that the *ἀρχή*, was really God himself. This divine power and energy was always with God, always belonged to him, and was inherent in him. *All things were made by it, and without it was not any thing made that was made.* Thus we read in the Psalms, *By the word of the Lord, were the heavens made, &c.*

Launching beyond the age of the apostles, we find ourselves in a wide sea of this *vain philosophy*, partly of Grecian, and partly of immediate Oriental extraction; which, however, as has been seen, was ultimately the same thing. The most distinguished of the christian Fathers, as Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, &c. were deeply versed in this philosophy, and studiously covered the *offence of the cross*, by giving such an idea of the author of their religion, and the tenets of it, as was calculated to strike the philosophical part of the world.

A principal source of the mixture of the Platonic philosophy with christianity was from the famous school of Alexandria, as will appear from the following general account of it in the *Apology of Ben Mordecai*\*. “ The

\* Letter, i. p. 105.

“ school of Alexandria in Egypt, which was  
“ instituted by Ptolemy Philadelphus, re-  
“ newed the old academy, or Platonic phi-  
“ losophy, and reformed it.—This school  
“ flourished most under Ammonius (the mas-  
“ ter of Origen and Plotinus) who borrow-  
“ ed his choicest contemplations from the  
“ sacred scriptures, which he mixed with his  
“ Platonic philosophizings; and it is dis-  
“ puted by Eusebius and Porphyry whether  
“ he died a pagan, or a christian\*. He had  
“ great advantages, being bred up in the  
“ same school with Philo Judæus. Besides  
“ this, there was in the town of Alexandria,  
“ a famous church, settled by Mark the  
“ Evangelist, and the school was continued  
“ by Pantænus, Clemens Alexandrinus, &c.,  
“ and after him successively by Origen, He-  
“ raclius, Dionysius, Athenadore, Malchion,  
“ and Didymus, who reached the year 350,

\* Mosheim says (*Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. p. 139) “ That Ammonius maintained, that the great principles “ of all philosophical and religious truth were to be found “ equally in all sects, that they differed from each other “ only in their methods of expressing them, and in some “ opinions of little or no importance; that all the Gentile “ religions, and even the christian, were to be illustrated “ and explained by the principles of this universal philo- “ sophy, which derived its original and consistence from “ the Eastern nations; that it was taught to the Egyptians “ by Hermes, and brought from them to the Greeks, and “ was preserved in its original purity by Plato, who was “ the best interpreter of Hermes, and of the other Oriental “ sages.”

“ which

“ which doctors gave an admirable advance  
“ to the church. The town was for this  
“ reputed the universal school of the church,  
“ and the Platonic philosophy was in the  
“ highest authority among the Fathers. For  
“ it was the common vogue, that it differed  
“ little from Moses ; yea, Cœlius Rhodius  
“ thinks, that Plato differs little from Christ’s  
“ placits.”

“ Origen, scholar to Ammonius, though  
“ a professed christian, followed his master’s  
“ steps, mixing the Platonic philosophy, and  
“ the doctrines of the gospel together; hop-  
“ ing thereby to gain credit to the christian  
“ religion ; and, with Clemens Alexandri-  
“ nus, and others, made use of the Platonic  
“ and Pythagoric philosophy, as a medium  
“ to illustrate the grand mysteries of faith,  
“ thereby to gain credit among those Plato-  
“ nic sophists. And F. Simon says, that the  
“ mixture of the Platonic philosophy with  
“ the christian religion, did not tend to the  
“ destruction of the orthodox faith, but more  
“ easily to persuade the Greeks to embrace  
“ christianity. This, no doubt, was the in-  
“ tent, and it succeeded as all such methods  
“ have done. Among other Platonic mys-  
“ teries, that of the *Logos*, on which Am-  
“ monius and Plotinus, both heads of the  
“ Platonic school, had commented, was  
“ taken, and applied to the divine logos, ex-  
“ plicated by St. John, which gave occasion  
“ and foundation to many philosophic dis-

“ putes, and contests in the school and  
“ church of Alexandria.”

That most of the celebrated Fathers were Platonists, and borrowed many of their explanations of scripture doctrines from that system, is too well known to be insisted upon here. It was by this means that Austin, by his own confession, as will be seen hereafter, came to understand, as he thought, the doctrine of the Trinity,

He said, that if the Platonists were to live over again, they would, by changing a few words and phrases only, become christians\*. Many of the Platonic philosophers, when they embraced christianity, did not lay aside their philosophical gown, but thought to follow Christ and Ammonius too†. The same judicious historian says, that those christian doctors, who were infected with Platonism, did not discourse of the state of souls after death, of the nature of the soul, of the trinity, and many other things that bore a relation to them, as those who drew their instructions from the sacred scriptures, and were taught by Christ only‡.

“ Synesius,” says Warburton §, “ went into the church a Platonist, and a Platonist he continued when he was there. “ This man could not be brought to be-

\* Mosheim's *Dissertations*, p. 98.

† Ib. p. 117.

‡ Ib. p. 210.

§ *Divine Legation*, vol. ii. p. 236.

“ lieve

“ lieve the apostolic doctrine of a resurrection, because he believed with Plato, “ that the soul was before the body, i. e. “ eternal, *a parte ante*. However, he was “ not for shaking hands with christianity, “ but would suppose some grand and pro- “ found mystery to lie hid under the scripture account of a resurrection.”

But it is not my design to trace the Platonism of the Fathers in every article of faith. Enough of it has appeared in my historical account of opinions concerning the nature of God, and the human soul, on which I have enlarged pretty much, in order to trace the rise and progress of the doctrines of materialism and immaterialism, and other things connected with them.

That the early heretics, or those who attempted to bring into christianity more of the Oriental system than the bulk of christians were disposed to relish, had their instructions partly in the East, and partly also in the school of Plato, is universally acknowledged. The doctrine of the Gnostics, says Beausobre \*, was compounded of the philosophy of Plato, the Oriental philosophy, and the christian religion. Tertullian's complaints, that so excellent a philosophy as that of Plato should give occasion to all the heresies, gives but too much reason, by discovering his own excessive admiration of it, to suspect that he

\* Vol. i. p. 394.

had himself made too free with it. "But  
 " in those days," says Beausobre \*, " it  
 " was allowed that, together with the fun-  
 " damental doctrines of christianity, any per-  
 " son was at liberty to philosophize about the  
 " rest; and the nearer they could bring their  
 " religion to the established principles of  
 " philosophy, the more success they had." But, how dangerous a maxim was this! It was, in fact, setting up their own wisdom against the wisdom of God himself.

Manes and his predecessors were all known adepts in the philosophy of the East. Basiliides, the proper founder of Manicheism, was a philosophical divine, who travelled into Persia, and mixed the philosophical opinions of that country with his religion †. Bardesanes travelled even into India, to acquaint himself with the wisdom of the Brachmans ‡. The four books of Scythian, a teacher of Manicheism, and who had travelled into India, were thought to be those which he had from the Brachmans, and which he brought into Egypt §. And the Valentinians, Beausobre says, were Pythagoricians and Platonists, as, he adds, were almost all the Greek philosophers, who embraced christianity ||.

Simon Magus is, by several ancient writers, called the *parent of all heresies*, not

\* Vol. i. p. 40.      † Ib. p. 40.      ‡ Ib. vol. ii. p. 129.

§ P. 45.

|| Vol. ii. p. 161.

that

that he was properly a christian heretic, but because the Gnostics, and other early heretics, borrowed much of their system from him, and because he introduced the Oriental philosophy into Judea, and that neighbourhood \*.

In these circumstances can it be any wonder that the pure religion of Christ got a tincture that would continue for ages, and even to the present time?

## S E C T I O N V.

### *Of the Influence of the Philosophical Systems on the Christian Doctrine concerning the PERSON OF CHRIST.*

PERHAPS the greatest disservice that the introduction of philosophy ever did to christianity was, that, in consequence of the general doctrine of the *pre-existence of all human souls*, the soul of Christ was, of course, supposed to have had a pre-existent state, and also to have had a superior rank and office before he came into the world, suitable to the power and dignity with which he appeared to be invested on earth.

Had the state of philosophical opinions in that age of the world been what it is now,

\* Mosheim's *Dissertations*, p. 226.

and,

and, consequently, had the doctrine of pre-existence been unknown, the rise of such a doctrine concerning the person of Christ would have been very extraordinary; and *the fact of its existence* might have been alledged as an argument for its truth. But the introduction of this tenet from the Oriental or Platonic philosophy was but too easy; so that to a person who considers the state of opinions at that time, there appears to have been nothing extraordinary in it. Nay, it would have been very extraordinary if, togetherwith other opinions, known to have been derived from that source, philosophizing christians had *not* adopted this also; the temptation in this case being greater than in any other whatever; viz. to wipe away the reproach which was reflected upon christianity from the *meanness of the person of our Saviour*, and the *indignity* with which he was treated.

We have seen that it was a fundamental doctrine in the East, and likewise in the Platonic system, that, on account of the mixture of *evil* in the world, it could not be supposed to have been made by the supreme Being himself; but that it was formed from pre-existent matter, by a celestial spirit, a principal emanation from the divine mind, the *Birnab* of the Hindoos, the *prima mens* of the Chaldeans, the *νοῦς* and *λόγος* of Plato. And what was more natural than to suppose, that the restorer of the human race had been the  
*former*

former of it; especially as those who adopted that hypothesis could so plausibly apply to Christ, as we know they actually did, those passages of the Old Testament, in which the world was said to have been made by the *word*, *λόγος*, of God, the same word or *power*, which actually dwelled in Christ, and acted by him \*. By this easy channel, I make no doubt, did this great corruption flow into the christian system, with all the train of mischievous consequences that soon followed it.

It is likewise remarkable, that, as in the philosophical system of those times, there was but *one* emanation of the Divine Being distinguished in so particular a manner as to be the creator of the world, so we find that christians were first charged with introducing *two Gods*, and not *three*, the divinity of the *Holy Ghost*, as a separate person, not having been an article in any christian creed till after the council of Nice. Also the orthodox in those times always gave that superiority to the Father, as the source of all intelligence, that the philosophers did to the *supreme mind* with respect to his emanations; so that the correspondence between the two systems was wonderfully complete.

The Platonists, indeed, besides *the second God*, called *νοῦς*, which they supposed to be a

\* Alexander, to prove the eternity of the Logos, cites Ps. xlv. i. *My heart is inditing a good matter, λογον αγαθον.* Jortin's *Remarks*, vol. iii. p. 47.

perfect image of the one supreme God, supposed a *third*, which was the *soul of the universe*, diffused through all its parts \*. But though this makes a kind of a *trinity of Gods*, and, therefore, the doctrine is by some of the orthodox, said to be found in that philosophy, it by no means tallies with the christian trinity. But the doctrine of a *second God*, an emanation from the first, is well known to have been a fundamental principle in the ancient philosophy.

According to the oracles of Zoroaster, the *monad*, from which all things were produced, delivered the government of things to the *second mind*, an opinion which, as Le Clerc says, was adopted by Plato †.

That this was the true source of the doctrine concerning the pre-existent nature and power of Christ, as well as of the aversion that was soon entertained to the thought of his having assumed a real body of flesh and blood, is so obvious, that even the orthodox Beaufobre almost acknowledges it, though without design. "Those," says he †, "who were educated in the school of Plato, whose philosophy was much esteemed in the East, believed that there was a perfect intelligence, called *vous*, or *αναστο*, an emanation from the supreme intelligence. They concluded, that this sublime intelligence might reveal his will to men, and

\* Beaufobre, vol. i. p. 560. † Stanley by Le Clerc, p. 26.

‡ Vol. i. p. 379.

" teach

“ teach men the way of salvation ; but could  
 “ not believe that he would become united  
 “ to matter. Their view,” he says \*,  
 “ was to abolish the *scandal of the cross*, and  
 “ to render the christian religion more plau-  
 “ sible.”

The history of Austin’s conversion to orthodoxy is another striking argument in favour of this hypothesis. “ Austin,” says Beaufobre †, “ believed Christ to be a *mere man*, though much exalted above others “ by divine gifts, till he learned of the “ books of Plato, translated by Victorinus, “ that the *Logos* existed before all things, “ that he was from eternity with God, that “ he created all things, that he is the only “ Son of the Father, and, finally, equal to “ the Father, being of the same substance “ with himself.”

The very *language*, which the early orthodox Fathers made use of to express the derivation of the Son from the Father, viz. *emanation, efflux, probole, &c.* shews plainly enough whence that doctrine was derived. This language is even used by some of the modern orthodox, without considering how the doctrine of the immateriality of the Divine Being is affected by it. Cudworth says, that “ the second and third persons in the “ trinity are eternal and necessary emanations from the first ‡,” “ and that they

\* P. 380.      † Vol. i. p. 478.      ‡ P. 559.

“ all have a mutual *existence* and *penetration* “ *of one another*\*.” This divine also maintains the subordination of the Son to the Father, which agrees with the ancient doctrines on this subject. He says †, that “ the second and third persons in the trinity are not so omnipotent as the first, because not able to produce it.”

Several of the orthodox christians, however, in early times, objected to the language above mentioned, viz. *emanation*, &c. as denoting either a *separation*, or *extension* of the divine essence, which the Basiliadans and Valentinians avowed ‡. But those christian writers who thought God to be corporeal, made no difficulty of explaining the generation of the Son by the term *αρούρα*, or *branch*, as not implying any separation of substance, or a part detached from the rest§. Tertullian uses this term. “ The Son,” says he, “ comes from the essence of the Father, as the stock of a tree from the root, or a ray from the sun. Justin Mar- “ tyr uses the same term ||.”

The Manicheans explained the generation of the Son from the Father, without supposing any loss to the Father, by comparing it to the lighting of one lamp by another \*\*. Justin Martyr and Tatian use this compa-

\* P. 559.

† P. 599.

‡ Beausobre, vol. i. p. 546.

§ Ib. p. 548.

|| Ib. p. 549.

\*\* P. 555.

rison. Tatian also uses another comparison with the same view; but it is less happy in other respects. When I speak to you, says he, and you hear me, my reason (*τοσος*) goes into you, without my being deprived of it \*.

Others of them had recourse to worse shifts than even this. Some of the catholics being charged with introducing three gods, and with making the persons of the trinity as distinct from one another, as Peter, James, and John, acknowledged it; saying, that Peter, James, and John might be said to be one, on account of their partaking of the same human nature †.

The term *τροπολη*, was rejected, however, by Origen, who was a Platonist, as implying, that God was corporeal ‡.

According to the heathen system, the emanation of the Son from the Father was not a necessary, but a *voluntary* thing, and took place either *in time*, according to the proper Oriental system, or *from eternity*, according to Plato. And we also find the doctrine of the voluntary emanation of the Son by the Father among the early christians, though this idea is not admitted at present. Justin Martyr says, that “the Father begat the Son voluntarily.” Origen taught the same doctrine, and Petavius acknowledges, that it was the

\* Beaufobre, p. 558.

† P 558.

‡ Vol. i. p. 532.

opinion of a great number of the ancient doctors\*. "The principles of the ancients concerning the trinity," says Mr. Dupin, was, "that the word was from all eternity in the Father, being his wisdom and power; and that when he chose to make the world, he put him, as it were, without himself†."

The Fathers did not, in general believe, that the Son was produced from eternity, but only immediately before the creation of the world, that he might be employed for that purpose‡. This opinion is found even later than the council of Nice§. Lactantius says, that "when God was resolved to make the world, which was to be composed of things of a contrary nature, he began with creating two sorts of them, the one good, his only Son, and the other evil, the devil, which are to be in continual war||."

It is, likewise, a very ancient opinion among very catholic authors, that the first intelligent being that God made was the devil; he being the first of those intelligences that God created an infinite number of ages before the creation of the visible world, at which time, and not before, Christ was produced\*\*.

The hypothesis I am pursuing clearly explains why the Marcionites, Valentinians, and Manicheans escaped censure at the coun-

\* Beausobre, vol. i. p. 522.      † Vol. i. p. 520.

‡ Ibid.      § P. 521.      || P. 574.      \*\* Ib. p. 524.

cil of Nice. For those sectaries, as Beausobre says\*, were orthodox with respect to the trinity; since they could make use of the term *consubstantial* as well as the most orthodox; which the Arians, who believed that the Logos was created out of nothing, could not do. The Manicheans believed the consubstantiality of the persons, but not their *equality*; believing the Son to be below the Father, and the Spirit below both †. This error, however, was not peculiar to them, but was very general ‡.

It is only by an attention to these principles, that we can understand the state of the controversy between the orthodox and the Arians. For though the Fathers in general believed, that the Son had not proceeded from the Father, but a short time before the creation of the world, in which he was employed, they believed, that he issued *from the substance of the Father*, and, therefore, was *light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made*, that is, *not created out of nothing*, which the Arians maintained. We see, then, that the Arians retained so much of the established system, as not to deny the *pre-existence* of Christ, or his office of *creating the world*. These notions were so deeply rivetted, that they were not easily eradicated; but, it is evident, that the Arians had less of the Oriental, or Platonic philosophy, than the orthodox.

\* Vol. i. p. 542.

† P. 561.

‡ Ib.

Indeed, the learned Cudworth acknowledges, that the Athanasians, and the Nicene Fathers platonized, and not the Arians; though he says, that they derived their ideas not from Plato, but from the scriptures \*. But of that let the reader judge. The platonizing Fathers, says Le Clerc †, thought, that before the actual generation of the Son, he was *virtually in the Father*, and, therefore, *auto&deos*, whereas the Arians denied this, and said, that he, like other creatures, was produced from nothing.

## SECTION VI.

### *General Arguments against the PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST.*

THE preceding history of opinions relating to the pre-existence of Christ affords a very striking argument against that doctrine. But I think it will not be amiss in this place, in order to remove the strong prejudices that have taken place with respect to this subject, to add some other arguments of a general nature, such as arise from the known state of things in the apostolic age, and what may be fairly inferred from the apostolic writings, without entering into the discus-

\* P. 529.

† See his Edition of Stanley, p. 160.

sion of particular texts of Scripture, for which I beg leave to refer my reader to my *Illustration of particular Texts*, and more especially to *Mr. Lindsey's excellent Sequel to his Apology*; where that worthy man, and valuable writer, has thrown much new light upon many of those passages which have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of the antipre-existent doctrine.

It is acknowledged by all writers, that, at the beginning of Christianity, there arose two opposite errors concerning the person of Christ. The first, they say, came from the Jewish converts, who maintained that Christ was only *a man*, distinguished by peculiar gifts. "This," says Athanasius, "was an error of the Jews, in the time of the apostles; and, he says, they drew the Gentiles into it." Of these there were two sorts, some called Nazarenes, who believed the miraculous conception, and the other Ebionites, who believed Christ to be born of Joseph and Mary. This is expressly said to have been *the most ancient heresy in the church*\*.

"Presently after, however, there arose another error, quite opposite to this, introduced by the Pagan philosophers, who stripped Christ of his human nature. This heresy was one of the first that spread among the Gentiles, and the apostle John

\* Beaufobre, vol. ii. p. 517.

" did all he could to prevent its spread, but  
" in vain\*."

Now, admitting these facts, viz. the existence of the *Nazarene* heresy, and that of the *Docetæ* in the apostolic age, and that the former was prior to the other, I think we may safely infer, from the notice taken of heresy in the New Testament, that the former was not considered as any heresy at all; because there is no mention made of it *as such*; whereas the other is inveighed against, and especially by the apostle John, in the strongest terms; and moreover, as has been shewn above, he evidently speaks of it in such a manner as implies, that he had no idea of any other heresy of consequence in his time.

Against this heresy he writes in the clearest and most express manner, and with the most vehement zeal. Of the other supposed heresy he is so far from taking any notice at all (notwithstanding what has been imagined by some commentors upon him) that he writes exactly like a person who considered Christ as a man, who was so far from being of the *same substance with the Father*, and consequently possessed of any power *of his own*, that he received all his powers immediately from God. And it is remarkable, that those texts which most strongly express the absolute dependence of Christ upon God, and which assert, that all the wisdom and power

\* Beausobre, p. 548.

that

that appeared in him were the wisdom and power of the Father, and not his own, occur chiefly in the gospel of this very apostle.

Also, the rest of the apostles, instead of taking any notice, direct or indirect, of this capital heresy, as it has been represented, constantly use a language that could not but give the greatest countenance to it; always speaking of Christ as *a man*, even when they represent him in a light of the greatest importance.

This utter silence of the writers of the New Testament concerning a *great heresy*, the very first that ever existed in the christian church, and as it is now represented, the most *dangerous* of all others; a heresy taking place chiefly among the Jews, with whom the apostles had most to do, looks as if they considered the opinion of the *proper humanity of Christ*, in a very different light from that in which it was viewed by their philosophizing successors.

Athanasius, who could not deny these facts, endeavours to account for them, by saying, that " all the Jews were so firmly persuaded " that their Messiah was to be nothing more " than a man like themselves, that the apostles were obliged to use great caution in " divulging the doctrine of the proper di- " vinity of Christ \*. But did the apostles

\* See his Epistola de Sententia Dionysii contra Arianos. Opera, vol. i. p. 553.

spare other Jewish prejudices, which were, at least, as inveterate as this, especially their zeal for the law of Moses, and their aversion to the admission of the Gentiles into the christian church without circumcision; &c. ? And ought not the *importance* of the doctrine to have constrained them to venture a little beyond the bounds of a *timid prudence*, in such a case as this ; especially as the Jewish christians in general, as far as appears, always continued in this error, till their final dispersion, by the civil convulsions that took place in the East, subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem ?

Besides, whether was it more probable that the *illiterate Jews*, who received their doctrine from none but the apostles themselves, and indeed conversed with no other, should have fallen into so grievous an error with respect to the person of Christ, *their own Messiah*, or those who are known to have drawn various opinions from other sources besides the genuine apostolical doctrine, and particularly from that very *philosophy* which, manifestly contrary to any thing that the Jews could possibly have learned from their sacred books, expressly taught the doctrine of the pre-existence of all human souls, and their emanation from the divine mind ; which was, in fact, the doctrine and language of the pretended orthodox Fathers ?

Without examining the merits of the question, *probability* will certainly incline us to take

take the part of the poor Jewish converts. Indeed, their poverty and illiterateness made them despised by the Gentile christians, who were captivated with the *wisdom of this world*: Justin Martyr, however, the earliest Gentile christian writer, speaks of them and their opinions with more respect than they were afterwards treated with. He was one of the first of the philosophising christians, and therefore might know that their doctrines were those of the bulk of christians in his time; and perhaps, at that time, few thought differently from them, besides a few speculative persons like himself\*.

2. It is evident, that the most intelligent of the Jews expected nothing more than a *mere man* for their Messiah †; nor can it be said that any of the ancient prophecies give us the least hint of any thing farther. Had the prophecies *not* been *explicit*, there seems to have been the greatest reason why our Lord, or his apostles, should have expressly observed that they were so; or if they had been universally

\* See Edit. Thyrby, p. 235.

† "They," says Trypho (the Jew speaker in Justin Martyr's Dialogue) "who think that Jesus was *a man*, and, being chosen of God, was anointed Christ, appear to me to advance a more probable opinion than your's. For all of us expect that Christ will be born *a man from man* (*ανθρωπον εξ ανθρωπου*) and that Elias will come to anoint him. If he, therefore, be Christ, he must, by all means, be *a man born of men*." Edit. Thyrby, p. 235.

*misunderstood*, or *perverted*, we might expect that this should have been noticed by our Lord, as well as other abuses or mistakes which prevailed in his time. Or if a discovery of so great importance would have staggered the faith, or checked the freedom of the disciples of our Lord, when they were fully apprized of the transcendent greatness of the person whom they had considered as a man like themselves, we might have expected that this great discovery would have been made to them, when their minds were fully enlightened by the descent of the Holy Spirit, or at some other time when they were fully instructed in all things relating to the religion they had to teach. And whenever the revelation of a thing so highly *interesting*, and *unexpected*, as this must have been, had been made to them, their wonder and surprise must have been such, as we should have found some *traces* or *intimations* of in their writings.

Nor can it be supposed that a thing of so wonderful a nature as this, could have been announced to the body of christians, who certainly had not, at first, the most remote idea of such a thing, without exciting an astonishment, that could not have been concealed, and such *speculations* and *debates* as we must have heard of. And yet the apostles, and the whole christian world, are supposed to have passed from a state of absolute ignorance concerning the nature of their Lord and Master (regarding him in the familiar light of a friend and

and brother) to the full conviction of his being the *most glorious of all created natures*; him by whom God originally made, and constantly supported all things, without leaving any intimation by which it is impossible for us to learn, *in what manner* so wonderful a communication was made to them, or of the effects it had on their own minds, or those of others.

At whatever time it be supposed that the apostles were first apprized of the *superangelic nature* of their Master, it might be expected, that so very material a change in their conceptions concerning him, would have been attended with a correspondent change in their *language*, when they spoke of him; and yet through the whole book of *Acts*, he has hardly any other appellation than simply that of *a man*. Thus the apostle Peter calls him\*, *A man approved of God*; and the apostle Paul †, *The man whom God ordained*. Nor when we may most certainly conclude, that the apostles meant to speak of him in his *highest capacity*, do they give him any other title; as when the apostle Paul says ‡, *There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

3. Had this Mediator between God and man been of a *middle nature* between God and man. I think one might have expected some *positive declaration* of it, in this or

\* *Acts* ii. 22. † *Acts* xvii. 31. ‡ *1 Tim.* ii. 5.

some

some such place ; and that the apostle would not have expressed himself in a manner so unguarded, and which, without some explanation, must necessarily lead his readers into a very great mistake. It is in vain, however, that we look through the whole New Testament for any thing like such an express declaration, or explanation on the subject ; and a doctrine of this extraordinary nature is only pretended to be deduced by way of *inference from casual expressions.*

4. It is also with me a very strong presumption against the Arian hypothesis, that no *use* is made by the writers of the New Testament, of so extraordinary a fact, as that of the union of a superangelic spirit with the body of a man. No *argument* or *exhortation* is ever grounded upon it ; whereas it might have been expected, that so very wonderful a thing as this must have been *alluded to*, and *argued from*, in a great variety of respects ; and especially that the first converts to christianity should have been frequently, and very distinctly informed of the *high rank of their master* ; especially as the great popular objection to the christian scheme was the *mean birth* and *obscurity* of its author, and the *disgraceful treatment* he met with in the world. The very few texts in which it is thought by some that arguments are drawn from the pre-existent state of Christ, appear to me to refer to nothing more than the dignity with which he was invested as *Messiah*, after he was *sent of*

*of God*, and endued with power from on high, for the important purposes of his mission.

It weighs much with me, that if so extraordinary a thing as the descent of a superangelic spirit, to animate a human body, had been true, it must have appeared, in the course of the history of Christ, that such an extraordinary a measure was *necessary*; as by his acting a part which a *mere man* was either naturally incapable of, or in which there was an obvious impropriety for a *mere man* to act. But so far are we from perceiving any thing of this in the evangelical history, that nothing is exhibited to us in it, but the appearance of *a man approved of God*, and *assisted* by him. For, though no man could have done what he is said to have done, *unless God had been with him*, yet *with that assistance*, every thing must have been easy to him.

If our Lord had, *in himself*, though derived originally from God, any extraordinary degree of wisdom, or peculiar ability of any other kind, for carrying on the work of man's redemption, above the measure or capacity of that nature which God had given to men, he would hardly have declared so frequently, and so expressly as he does, that *of his own self he could do nothing*, that *the words which he spake were not his own*, but *his Father's who sent him*, and that *his Father within him did the works*. This is certainly the proper language of a person who is possessed of no more natural advantage than any other man.

If

If he had any superior powers, abstracted from what he derived from the immediate agency of God, *in what they do appear?*

So solicitous does the Divine Being always appear, that his rational offspring, mankind, should *understand* and *approve* of his proceedings respecting them, that there is hardly any measure which he has adopted, that is of much moment to us, for which some *plain reason* is not assigned by one or other of the sacred writers. Indeed, this is a circumstance that cannot but contribute greatly to the efficacy of such measures. But though, I believe, every other circumstance relating to the scheme of redemption is clearly revealed to us, yet we neither find any reason assigned for so important a preliminary to it, as the *incarnation of the first of all created beings*, nor are we any where given to understand, that this was a necessary preliminary to it, though the reasons for it were such as we could not comprehend. A conduct so exceedingly dark and mysterious as this, has no example in the whole history of the dispensations of God to mankind.

5. Could the history of the *miraculous conception of Jesus* have been written so fully as it is by both Matthew and Luke, and so very important a circumstance relating to it as this have been overlooked by them, if it had been at all known to them? I will appeal to any Arian, whether he himself could possibly have given such an account of that transaction

action as either of these evangelists has given. It must certainly be thought by them to be a capital omission in the account.

6. It has often been observed, and I cannot but think very justly, that the uniform scripture doctrine of the present and future dignity of Christ, being conferred as *the reward of his services and sufferings on earth*, is peculiarly favourable to the idea of his being a man only; and I think the Arians are obliged to strain very hard in order to make out any material difference between the pre-existent and present state of Christ; or to explain the nature of his *reward*, of which so striking an account is always given, if there be no material difference between the two states.

7. It is said that, if it be difficult to explain the reward of Christ upon the Arian hypothesis, it is equally difficult to account for his distinguished reward and future honour and power upon the supposition of his being a *mere man*; these being *too great* in this case, if they were *too little* in the other. But it should be considered, that there is a *natural propriety* in distinguishing a man appointed by God to act the most important part that man could act (and a part, that *no other than a man* could with propriety appear in, respecting the whole human race) in a manner greatly superior to what is conferred on any other man.

It should also be considered, that there are many passages of scripture, which most expressly

presly say, that, great as is the honour and dignity to which Christ is advanced, his disciples, and especially his apostles, will be advanced to *similar*, if not *equal* honour. And it is remarkable, that there is no one *power*, or *prerogative*, that is mentioned as conferred on Christ, but the same is likewise said to be imparted to his followers.

As to what is called his *glory*, or honour and dignity in general, and the *love* that God has for him, that love and high regard from which those honours proceed, our Lord himself says expressly, that his disciples are on a level with himself. What else can be inferred from his prayer before his death, in which he says\*, *That they may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.—and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* Other parts of this remarkable prayer are in the same strain, and it appears to me, that nothing but our having long considered Christ in a light infinitely higher than that of his disciples, has prevented our understanding it as we ought to have done.

Christ is appointed to *raise the dead*, but this is not said to be performed by any pro-

\* John xvii. 21.

per power of his own, any more than the miracles of that and other kinds which he wrought when he was on earth, and dead persons were raised to life by the apostles as well as by himself.

Christ is also said to judge the world. But even this honour is said to be shared with him by his disciples, and especially the apostles. *Know ye not, says St. Paul\*, that the saints shall judge the world. And if the world be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters. Know ye not, that we shall judge angels, how much more things that pertain to this life.*

8. The kingdom of Christ, whatever it be, is expressly said to have an end†. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father. — And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* This is what we should hardly have expected if Christ had been the first of all created beings, by whom all things were made, and who upholds and governs all things.

9. How it may affect others I cannot tell, but with me it is a very great objection to the pre-existence of Christ, that it favours strongly of the Oriental doctrine of the *pre-existence of all human souls*, which was the foundation of the Gnostic heresy, and the source of great

\* 1 Cor. vi. 2.

† 1 Cor. xv. 24.

corruption in genuine christianity. For if the soul of one man might have pre-existed, separate from the body, why might not the soul of another, or of all? Nay, analogy seems to require, that the whole species be upon one footing, in a case which so very nearly concerns the *first and constituent principles of their nature*. Besides, the opinion of the separability of the thinking part of man from his bodily frame, even after he comes into the world, is so far from being agreeable to the phenomena of human nature, that it is almost expressly contradicted by them all.

10. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, one of whose principal objects was to reconcile the Jews to the thoughts of a suffering Messiah, seems to make use of arguments which necessarily suppose Christ to have been a man like ourselves; as when he says\*, *We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* In this passage the writer seems to consider Christ as a *man*, in direct opposition to created beings of a *superior nature*, or *angels*, under which denomination Christ himself must have been ranked, according to the phraseology of scripture, if he had existed prior to his becoming man; since no other term is made use of, to denote his nature and constitution, as distinct from that of men, or angels.

† Heb. ii. 9.

With this view this writer applies to Christ, that authority and dominion which is ascribed to man, *as distinguished from angels*, by the Psalmist, Ps. viii. 5. *For unto the angels hath he not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.* But one in a certain place, testified, saying, *What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the work of thine hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* As, in this passage, he plainly considers the nature of man as properly characterized by his being *a little lower than the angels*, and he applies the very same expression to Christ, without giving the least hint of any distinction between them, I cannot help thinking, that in the writer's idea, the nature of both was precisely the same.

It is also remarkable, that this same writer speaks of Christ as distinguished from angels, when he says \*, *That God had anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, by which, therefore, *in this connection*, I do not see how we can help understanding his *fellow men, or fellow prophets.*

11. This writer, also, seems to lay particular stress on Christ's having *felt* as we feel, and having been *tempted* as we are tempted; and to assert, that for this purpose, it was ne-

\* Heb. ii. 5. &c.

cessary, that he should be, *in all respects*, what we ourselves are\*, For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren—and children†, Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. And again†, Wherefore in all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest §. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Now, I cannot help thinking from these passages, that the writer had an idea of Christ being much more *what we are*, and consequently of his *feeling* more as we do, than he could have meant, upon the supposition of his being of an angelic, or superangelic nature. For then, the views that he had of his *sufferings*, and consequently his *feelings under them*, must have been exceedingly dissimilar to ours. And every argument that the apostle uses, to shew the impropriety of Christ's being an *angel*, seems to weigh much more against his being of a nature *superior to angels*.

12. If it be supposed that, upon becoming an inhabitant of this world, Christ lost all consciousness of his former pre-existent state, I do not see of what use his superior powers

\* Heb. ii. 11, &c.

† V. 13, 14.

‡ V. 17.

§ V. 18.

could possibly have been to him ; or, which comes to the same thing, what occasion there was for such a being in the business. Besides, the hypothesis of an intelligent being, thinking and acting in one state, and losing all the remembrance of what he had been and done in another, has something in it that looks so arbitrary and unnatural, that one would not have recourse to it, but upon the most urgent necessity.

It should seem, however, that if Christ did pre-exist, it was not unknown to him in this world, since one of the strongest arguments for this hypothesis is, his praying that *his father would glorify him with the glory that he had before the world was* \*. But if Christ did retain a perfect consciousness of his former state, and, consequently, retained all the powers, and all the knowledge of which he was possessed in that state, I have no idea of such an *increase of wisdom* as the evangelist Luke ascribes to him, when he says †, *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.* In the idea of this evangelist, Jesus certainly made such improvements in knowledge, as other well-disposed youths make ; so that I think he had manifestly no other idea of him.

13. Similar to the above-mentioned reasoning of the author of the epistle to the

\* John xvii. 5.

† Ch. ii. 52.

Hebrews, is that of the apostle John, or rather of that of Christ himself\*. *And he hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the son of man*; for I do not see the force of this inference, unless the meaning of it be, that Christ, being a man like ourselves, having felt as we feel, and having been tempted and tried as we have, is the most *unexceptionable* of all judges. No man can complain of it, since it is being judged, as it were, *by our peers*, and by a person who knows how to make every proper allowance for us.

14. Some may possibly lay stress on its being said by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, in the passage above-mentioned, that *Christ himself took flesh and blood*, as if it had depended upon his own choice, whether he would become man or not, which implies a pre-existent state. But the word *πειρα* is used for *partaking*, or *sharing in*, absolutely, without any respect to *choice*, and is used in that sense in two other passages of this epistle †, where the apostle speaks of the *propriety of the divine designation*, not of the motive of Christ's election. Also in other places, he is represented as *passive* with respect to the same event. Thus, in the ninth verse of the same chapter, it is said, that *Jesus was made a little lower than the angels*, and not that *he made himself lower*, or condescended.

\* John v. 27.

† Ch. v. 13. vii. 13.

It is said \*, that *Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham.* But *επιταπειρουμι*, which is the word here used, properly signifies, and is, in every other place, in the New Testament, rendered to *lay hold upon*. In this place, therefore, the meaning probably is, that Christ did not (after he appeared in the character of the Messiah) lay hold upon, so as to *interpose in the favour of*, or *rescue*, angels, but the seed of Abraham ; and thence we see, that the apostle infers, that there was a necessity, or at least an exceeding great propriety, that a Mediator for men should be, in all respects, a man ; for he immediately adds, *therefore in all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, &c.*

15. Indeed, there appears to me to be a most evident propriety, that a person who acted so important a part with respect to mankind, as Christ did, who was sent to be our instructor and example, and especially who came to ascertain the great doctrine of a *resurrection from the dead*, should be, with respect to his *nature*, the very same that we ourselves are ; that he might exhibit before us an example of proper *human virtue*, and especially that he might die as we ourselves die, and his *resurrection* be the *resurrection of a man like ourselves* ; and so the proper *first fruits from the*

\* V. 16.

dead, and consequently of the very *same kind* with those of which the *general harvest* will consist ; and thereby give us the greater reason to hope, that because *Christ lives we shall live also.*

16. It is now agreed, both by Arians and Socinians, that the supreme God is the only object of *prayer* ; it being acknowledged, that we have no authority in the scriptures for addressing ourselves to *Christ* : but this restriction cannot be founded upon any other than the Socinian hypothesis, and is by no means reconcileable with the principles of Arianism.

I ought not, in reason, to address a petition to *a man* who may not be within hearing of me ; and much less can there be a propriety in numbers of persons, in very distant places, addressing themselves to the same man at the same time, because no man can attend to more than one person, or one thing, at once. But a Being equal to the formation of the world, and especially of the whole system of worlds, and even the universe, or the whole creation ; he by *whom all things consist*, that is, who still *supports*, and governs all things, must be *capable* of giving his attention to every thing that passes. Nay, every thing must necessarily be at all times subject to his inspection ; and, therefore, there could be no impropriety, *in the nature of things*, in addressing prayers to him.

Besides, it is very obvious to reflect, that if there was any reason, or propriety, that some

some derived being, and not the Supreme, should be the immediate *maker of the world*, and that the Deity should not himself interpose in the government of it, it can only be this derived being, and not the Supreme, *with whom we have to do*. It can only be to him who *made us* what we are, and who himself immediately *supports us* in being, that we ought to look. A child naturally addresses itself to its nurse, who attends constantly upon it, and not to its mother; and a tenant applies to the steward, who immediately inspects and manages the estate, and not to the owner of it.

In fact, no reason can be imagined why the Supreme Being should delegate to any inferior the making and governing of the world, which would not be equally a reason for his appointing him to hear our prayers. Nothing but the most express declarations, founded on reasons, which I should think impossible to suggest, can authorise us, to admit the former, and not the latter, the connection is so natural. I therefore look upon the undoubted *fact* of all prayer being, upon the plan of revelation, confined to God, exclusive of all inferior beings, and of Christ, to be a most satisfactory argument, that God himself is alone the immediate maker of the world; and that it is he himself who constantly supports and governs it, without the mediation of any such glorious, though derived

rived being, as the Arians imagine Christ to have been before his incarnation.

17. It is said, and certainly with great reason, that it is in vain to preach christianity to Jews or Mahometans, while it is loaded with such a tenet as the doctrine of the *Trinity*, which, it is well known, they both regard as equally absurd and impious; the great and distinguishing principle of the Jewish religion being the *unity of God*, and the great objection that the Mahometans made to the corrupt christianity of the sixth century, being the general departure of christians from the same fundamental principle, as may be seen in the Koran itself. But the principles of Arianism are hardly more reconcileable to the notions of Jews, or Mahometans, than those of Athanasianism; and the following language of the Jew in Limborch's *Gallatio*, is applicable to the idea of Christ being the maker of the world, and the person who spake to Moses in the burning bush, as well as to his being strictly equal to the Father. "The prophet," he says, "who pretends to be the true God of Israel, who arrogates divine omnipotence, and gave his own words as the words of God, cannot be admitted; and, supposing what is impossible, that the true Messiah should publish this doctrine, he ought to be stoned as a false prophet\*."

\* See Justin's Remarks, vol. iii. p. 342.

The conduct which Dr. Jortin, who was himself an Arian, recommends with respect to the Jews, I think to be insidious, unworthy of christian simplicity, and what must be altogether ineffectual. He says, that, " in addressing Jews and Mahometans, whose great objection to christianity is the doctrine of the trinity, no one should attempt to remove this prejudice, till he has brought them to believe the divine mission of Jesus Christ, and his character as a prophet, Messiah, a teacher of truth, and worker of miracles ; and that then many things may be observed concerning the *logos*, the angel of God's presence, and the angel of the covenant, from the Old Testament, and from Philo, and from some ancient Jewish writers\*."

But, in fact, *external* evidence is nothing more than *conditional* evidence with respect to christianity, going upon the supposition, that the things to be proved by miracles are not *incredible in themselves*. The evidence that might be sufficient to satisfy a Jew, that Christ was simply a *teacher sent from God*, and such a Messiah as *their prophecies announced*, would by no means prove to his conviction, that he was the *maker of the world*, and such a Messiah as he was fully persuaded their ancient prophets did *not* foretell, and such a one as it was utterly repugnant to the whole system of his religion to admit.

\* Ib. vol. iii. p. 439.

18. Some Arians of the present age, staggered, it may be supposed, with the glaring absurdity of making a man who died upon the cross to be the maker of the world, and one who, even in his lowest state of humiliation, was actually *supporting all things with the word of his power*, and of supposing him to be the person who, with the name and character of *Jehovah*, had intercourse with the patriarchs, spake to Abraham, to Moses, and to all the nation of Israelites from mount Sinai, &c. &c. &c. seem willing to abandon this part of the system; but without considering, that, with it, they necessarily abandon all the advantages for the sake of which the whole system was originally adopted. They likewise disclaim the aid of the very strongest texts on which the doctrine of pre-existence is founded; as the introduction to the gospel of John, which speaks of the logos as the Being *by whom all things were made*, and *without whom nothing was made that was made*, Col. i. 5. which speaks of Christ as the *first born of every creature*, *by whom all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible*, &c. as being *before all things*, and *by whom all things consist*, and, Heb. i. 3. where Christ is said to be the person *by whom God made the World*, or rather *the ages*, and who *upholds all things by the word of his power*.

Upon

Upon the whole, nothing can be more evident, than that this *low Arian hypothesis* has no plausible foundation whatever, except being free from the palpable absurdities of the *high Arian scheme*. Certainly, the person who can explain those texts, which speak of Christ as the *maker and supporter of all things*, without supposing that he pre-existed, can have no difficulty in explaining any other texts, which represent him as *simply pre-existing*. For the most difficult of all the texts are those in which his *creating and supporting power* are expressly referred to. The capital circumstances that recommended the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence, when it was started, were the ideas of the *maker* of the world being the great *restorer* of it, and the giver of the *law* being the author of the *gospel*; so that the same person was the medium of all the dispensations of God to mankind. But when these flattering advantages are abandoned, nothing is left but *simple pre-existence*, without any knowledge, or the least colourable conjecture, that Christ had ever borne any *relation to this world* more than to any other.

It is no less evident, that by abandoning the specious advantages of the proper Arian hypothesis, the low Arians are as far as ever from being able to avail themselves of the advantages peculiar to the Socinian scheme; as the propriety of a man being employed in a business so nearly respecting *men*, his exhibiting

hibiting an example of proper *human virtue*, having a reward capable of being conferred on all his followers; of the same kind of being, viz. a man, both introducing *death*, and the *resurrection of the dead*; of the *first fruits* from the dead being of the same kind with the general *harvest*; and that the great judge of all men should be himself a man.

In fact, therefore, this low Arian hypothesis is intirely destitute both of the strongest texts in favour of pre-existence, and also of every advantage peculiar either to the high Arian hypothesis, or the Socinian, so that no scheme can be more insignificant, or rest on narrower or weaker foundations.

Had such general considerations as these been attended to, the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ could never have advanced so triumphantly as it has done. And such arguments as these ought certainly to weigh more than the supposed *incidental reference* to a doctrine in particular texts of scripture, the interpretation of which is always various and uncertain. Besides, if we confine ourselves to the literal interpretation of particular texts of scripture, there is no system that we may not embrace.

The doctrine of *transubstantiation* is doubly intrenched in such fortifications as these, and so are the gross errors which have now got the name of *Calvinism*, such as *original sin*, *atonement*, &c. and also the doctrine of

of the *perfect equality of the Son to the Father*. And yet Arians do not find themselves affected by such texts; and, in my opinion, it requires much less judgment to see that the texts on which they lay so much stress are equally insufficient to bear it.

19. If we consider the *practical tendency* of the doctrine concerning Christ, I think we shall find nothing at all in favour of the scheme of pre-existence; but much in favour of the contrary doctrine, which represents him as a man like ourselves. To this purpose I shall quote, with some little addition, what I have said on this subject in the *Discourse on the Corruption of Christianity* \*.

“ Much of the peculiar power of the gospel motives to virtue (separate from our acting with a view to obtain the reward of immortality promised in it) arises from just ideas of the nature and offices of Christ, as distinct from those of the Divine Being himself, with which they are too much confounded upon the supposition of the proper Deity, or super-angelic nature of Christ, notwithstanding the different offices ascribed to the divine persons, or rather beings, in the Athanasian scheme.

“ The consideration of the *love of Christ*, has something in it peculiarly endearing, when it is not considered as the same thing with the *love of the Creator towards his creatures*, but

“ as the love of one, who, notwithstanding  
“ his miraculous birth, was as much a  
“ man as Adam was, or as we ourselves are;  
“ when it is considered as the love of our  
“ elder brother, who bore our infirmities, who  
“ felt all the pains and agonies that man can  
“ feel; and, being the very same that we are,  
“ was in all respects tempted as we are; who,  
“ loved us, and freely gave himself to death for  
“ us, to redeem us from sin and misery, that  
“ we might become partakers of the same  
“ love of God, and be joint heirs with him  
“ of the same glory and happiness, that we  
“ might all alike become kings and priests  
“ unto God, even the Father, for ever and  
“ ever; who after living many years on  
“ earth, in which he manifested the most  
“ intense affection for us, is now gone to  
“ prepare a place for us in our heavenly Fa-  
“ ther's house, that where he is, there we may be  
“ also; as one who is now exercising a power  
“ which, as the reward of his obedience  
“ unto death, he received from God, to be  
“ head over all things to his church; who still  
“ feels for, and will be present with his  
“ faithful disciples and followers in all their  
“ trials, even to the end of the world.

“ The esteem and love that we bear to  
“ the character which we form of Christ,  
“ considered as a man like ourselves, the  
“ attachment we have to him, and his cause,  
“ and the efficacy of this principle to pro-  
“ mote a christian temper and conduct, and  
“ to

“ to encourage us to follow this our glorious leader, the *captain of our salvation*, and “ the *first fruits from the dead* (even though, “ like him, we be called to *lay down our lives for our friends*, and to bear persecution “ and torture in the cause of conscience, “ virtue, truth, and God) is exceedingly “ great, and *peculiar to itself*. It is a kind “ of love and esteem that cannot be felt by “ one who is truly and practically an Athana-“ nian or Arian, and, in general, but im-“ perfectly by those who have long been “ Athanasians or Arians; and who, there-“ fore, cannot easily get rid of the ideas “ they have had of Christ as God, or at least “ as a Being who has little in common with “ us; who, therefore, could not feel as we “ do, act upon views similar to ours, or en-“ tertain, and be the proper object of, a “ similar and reciprocal affection.

“ A man may have rejected the Athana-“ nian or Arian hypothesis a long time, “ before these ideas shall even occur to “ him, or their power be at all apprehend-“ ed. At least we can only expect to feel “ their influence at intervals, and must not “ hope to experience that amazing force, “ which, however, we may easily conceive “ they must have had with the primitive “ christians, and especially with the apostles, “ and others, who personally knew Christ, “ and who, therefore, never had an idea of his “ being any other than a man like them-

“ selves; though, as Peter expresses himself,  
“ *a man approved of God by miracles and won-*  
“ *ders and signs which God did by him.*”

Upon the whole, I cannot help thinking it to be a capital advantage of the doctrine of *Materialism*, that it leaves no shadow of support for the doctrine of *pre-existence*, or the *Arian hypothesis*, which is totally repugnant to the genuine principles of the christian religion, so as hardly to be brought within the general outline of it; and that the greatest mischief that christianity has derived from the unnatural mixture of heathen philosophy with the principles of it, has been this injudicious exaltation of our Saviour; which, in fact, has been nothing else than setting up the vain conceits of men in opposition to the wisdom of God.

In what I have observed in this section I am far from meaning to detract from the peculiar dignity and just prerogative of Christ. And upon this subject I shall beg leave to quote what I have in my *Discourse concerning the Spirit of Christianity* prefixed to my *Essay on Church Discipline*, p.

“ Our aptness to pass from one extreme to another, and the inconvenience attending it, are also felt with respect to our sentiments concerning the person and character of Christ. Upon finding, that instead of being *very God of very God, the Creator of heaven and earth*, he is only *a man like ourselves*, we are apt at first to under-value him, and not to consider him in that

“ *distinct*—

“ distinguished light in which, though a  
 “ man, he is every where represented in  
 “ the scriptures; as the great instrument in  
 “ the hands of God, of reversing all the ef-  
 “ fects of the fall; as the object of all the  
 “ prophecies from Moses to his own time;  
 “ as the great bond of union to virtuous and  
 “ good men (who, as *christians*, or having  
 “ Christ for their master and head, make  
 “ one body, in a peculiar sense) as introduced  
 “ into the world without a human father;  
 “ as having communications with God, and  
 “ speaking and acting from God, in such a  
 “ manner as no other man ever did; and,  
 “ therefore, having *the form of God*, and be-  
 “ ing *the Son of God*, in a manner peculiar to  
 “ to himself; as the means of spreading  
 “ divine and saving knowledge to all the  
 “ world of mankind; as under God, *the*  
 “ *head over all things to his church*; and as  
 “ *the Lord of life*, having power and au-  
 “ thority from God, to raise the dead and  
 “ judge the world at the last day.

“ There seems to be a peculiar propriety,  
 “ that these powers respecting *mankind*, should  
 “ be given to a *man*; and, it therefore be-  
 “ hoved our Redeemer, to be *in all things like*  
 “ *unto his brethren*, and to be *made perfect*  
 “ *through sufferings*; but, certainly the man  
 “ who is invested with these powers and  
 “ prerogatives should be the object of our at-  
 “ tention, reverence, and love, in such a man-  
 “ ner as no other man can be, or *ought* to be.”

## SECTION VII.

*Of the Opinions that have been held concerning  
MATTER, and their Influence with respect  
to Christianity.*

WE have already seen a great deal of the mischievous consequence that has followed from the specious doctrine of matter being the source of all evil, and of the union of an immaterial principle with it. In this section I propose to enter into a more particular detail of those consequences with respect to the christian doctrine of a *resurrection*, the *state of marriage*, and other things connected with it, and with this I propose to close the subject. It may not be amiss, however, previous to this, to state distinctly the various opinions that have been held concerning matter. For, notwithstanding almost all the philosophical opinions have been nearly the same, there have been some differences among them.

Some of the philosophers thought that matter was originally without motion, quality, or form; but capable of receiving them, though with some necessary imperfections; while others gave it qualities, figure, and even a *soul*\*, and Pythagoras thought matter animated, as well as evil, and was therein followed by Plato and Plutarch †.

\* Beausobre, vol. ii. p. 245. † P. 248.

The

The opinion of an *immaterial principle* as necessary to motion, &c. is a prevailing sentiment at present, but was by no means so in ancient times. Otherwise the souls of brutes could never have been thought material, and mortal. Aristotle, and all the ancients, admitted a *motive force* in matter, without which they could not complete the idea of a body. This is acknowledged by Malebranche, and especially by Leibnitz, and the schoolmen. Goudin says, *Ratio principii activi convenit substantiis corporeis, et inde pendent affectiones corporum quæ cernuntur in modo* \*.

Plato thought that all evil came from matter, and that its imperfection was eternal and incorrigible. It was a maxim with him, that an eternal being can produce nothing but an eternal being, and that corporeal and frail beings are the production of inferior intelligences. He, therefore, makes the angels of the planets to be the formers of the human body †.

Many of the Jews entertained no better an opinion of matter than the Oriental or Greek philosophers: Maimonides says ‡, that all impediments and obstacles which hinder men in their progress towards perfection, and all sin, come only from the part of matter. He also says, that matter is to be understood by

\* Histoire naturelle de l'ame, p. 212.

† Beaufobre, vol. ii. p. 416.

‡ More Nevochim, preface and p. 345.

the *adulterous woman*, in the book of Proverbs, seducing a young man to criminal conversation with her.

Manes thought the demons altogether material, and Beausobre says \*, that many of the ancient Fathers thought the same. According to some of the orthodox Fathers, the devil is the angel to whom God intrusted the government of matter †.

The complaint of the *evil tendency of matter* is a hackneyed topic of declamation among all the ancients, heathens and christians. Origen, among others, considered the body as the *prison of the soul* ‡, and every thing that tended to humble and bring under the body, was thought to be the triumph of the soul, and a step towards its purification and restoration.

The whole of this specious doctrine was evidently drawn from other sources than the system of Moses. He speaks of God himself as the maker of the terrestrial world, and of all things in it; and, perhaps with an intended opposition to the principles of the other system, if it existed in his time, he particularly says ||, *And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* In opposition to the doctrine of *evil* having a different origin from the *good* that we see in the world, the later prophets constantly

\* Vol. ii. p. 259.    † Ib. p. 99.    ‡ Ib. p. 475.

|| Gen. i, 31.

speak of God as equally the author of both; and *punishment*, contrary to the doctrine of the philosophers, is always most expressly ascribed to him. But this doctrine of Moses and the prophets, even when reinforced by that of Christ and the apostles, was not able to stem the torrent of the Oriental philosophy, which went upon a different principle.

That the doctrine of matter being the source, of all evil, accords very ill with the christian doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead*, cannot but be very evident to every person who reflects a moment on the subject. In fact, they are diametrically opposite to one another. On the christian principles, our only hope is founded upon a resurrection; whereas, on the philosophical principles, *a re-union to the body* is a thing most of all to be dreaded.

The opposition of these principles was so manifest, that all the first christians, who adopted the foreign philosophy, absolutely denied, or explained away, the doctrine of a resurrection; and though the authority of the apostles checked this extravagance, they were not able to prevent the mischief entirely; and even at this very day the advantage of the christian resurrection is, in general, rated very low; and in the eye of reason it must appear an incumbrance upon the philosophical scheme.

The repugnance between these philosophical principles and the doctrine of a resurrection appeared in the Jews as well as in the christians. For the Essenes, as Mosheim says \*, maintained, that future rewards and punishments extend to the soul only, and not to the body, which they considered as a mass of malignant matter, and as the prison of the immortal spirit.

The opinion that matter is the source of all evil, and the contempt that, in consequence of it, was entertained for the body, was capable of two opposite applications, one in favour of sensuality, as a thing that did not affect the mind, and the other of the mortification of the body; and we find that, in fact, this double use was made of those principles, according as the persons who adopted them were inclined.

The Gnostics, says Mosheim †, were always talking of the contemplation of things invisible, and of the Deity, and thought all things lawful to them that agreeably affected the body. He also says ‡, that those of the Oriental sects, who were of a voluptuous turn, might consider the actions of the body as having no relation to the state of a soul in communion with God. Some of them even maintained, that the souls were sent into the

\* Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 95.

† Dissertations, p. 243. ‡ Ecclesiast. Hist. vol. i. p. 14.

body that they might indulge in all sensual pleasure, and that they could not arrive at perfection till they had performed their task. They acknowledged that Christ taught purity, but not to all ; that it was proper for the *carna!*, but not the *spiritual* and *perfect*\*. It is not improbable that the heretics, against whom the apostles, and our Saviour, in the book of Revelation, inveigh so much, were Gnostics of this kind ; and that afterwards the same philosophical principles took an opposite turn, and led to mortifications and austerities †.

In various other respects, also, the doctrine of matter being the source of evil, and a clog upon the immaterial soul, has had most pernicious consequences ; having introduced maxims and customs contrary to all common sense, the very reverse of the doctrines of the gospel,

\* Mosheim's *Dissertations*, p. 247, 248.

† Another vice, of most pernicious consequence, the christians of the second and third centuries seem to have derived from the maxims of the philosophers, but because it does not relate to the subject of this work, except so far as it shews, in general, the hurtful connection of christianity and philosophy, I shall insert in a note. It is the lawfulness of *lying to promote a good cause*.

Timæus Locrus, the master of Pythagoras, says, that as we use poisons to cure mens' bodies, if wholesome remedies will not do, so we restrain mens' minds by falsehoods, if they will not be led with truth. *Mosheim's Dissert.* p. 195. Plato gave into the same vice, ib. p. 156, and in his book, *De Republica*, he says, the chiefs of a city may deceive the rest for their good, but that others ought to abstain from lying, p. 199.

gospel, and that have actually done much mischief in society. Such, more especially, is the influence it has had with respect to the prevailing notions concerning *marriage, continence, fasting, &c.*; some particulars relating to which, being curious, I shall recite.

That the opinion of the great value and importance of bodily austerities came from the heathen philosophy, is evident from the known sentiments and practices of the philosophers on the subject.

The custom of *fasting*, says Mosheim \*, is chiefly to be ascribed to the Platonists. Pythagoras forbad his disciples the use of flesh, and Porphyry imitated him in a book written for that purpose. The Platonic school, he says †, thought it was better to abstain from flesh, especially if persons gave themselves to

On this account, when christianity prevailed, the Platonic philosophers endeavoured, by feigned accounts of Pythagoras, and other early philosophers, to eclipse christianity, setting up their characters and actions, as if they had been superior to Christ. Hence the writings, ascribed to Hermes and Zoroaster, and hence, some think, those of Sanchoniatho, to discredit those of Moses, ib. p. 199.

But the greatest misfortune was, that those christians, who embraced the Platonic principles in other respects, received this also, and thought it innocent and commendable to lie for the sake of truth; and hence came so many *forged gospels*, and other writings of a similar nature, which did not appear till after the æra of the incorporation of philosophy with christianity, ib. p. 200. Origen, in particular, avowed this principle, p. 203. and also Chrysostom, p. 205.

\* *Dissert.* p. 177.

† *Ib.* p. 177.

meditation, and the contemplation of divine things.

“ Some of the philosophers,” says Jortin\*, “ exercised strange severities upon themselves, and upon their disciples, from the days of Pythagoras to the time of Lucian, “ who introduces the philosopher Nigrinus as condemning such practices, and observing, that they had occasioned the deaths of several persons. The Greek philosophers,” he says †, “ had a particular dress, and affected to appear rough, mean, and dirty ; “ for which they were sometimes insulted in the streets by boys, and by the populace ; and the Cynics very prudently were armed with a staff to defend themselves from dogs and from the rabble. The christian monks,” he adds, “ imitated the old philosophers in their rags and appearance, and many of them seemed, in the opinion of those who loved them, to have inherited the rags, the pride, and contentious spirit of the former.”

According to Ammonius, the *wise* were to raise above all terrestrial things, by the towering efforts of holy contemplation, those souls whose origin was celestial and divine. They were ordered to extenuate by hunger, thirst, and other mortifications, the *sluggish body*, which confines the activity, and restrains

\* Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. iii. p. 23.

† Ib. p. 26.

the liberty of the immortal spirit ; that thus, in this life, they might enjoy communion with the Supreme Being, and ascend after death, active and unencumbered, to the universal parent, to live in his presence for ever \*.

A very peculiar notion that the philosophers entertained concerning dæmons was the cause of much of their doctrine of the mortification of the body. They taught, says Mosheim †, that the dæmons, being furnished with subtle bodies, were very greedy of carnal pleasures, and possessed men for the sake of enjoying them ; and therefore that he who would drive away dæmons, must fast, and mortify himself, and that those who were married would do well to abstain from their wives as much as possible. On this account many lived with their wives as with sisters, and called them by that name.

The Docetæ in general condemned marriage altogether, but others spake of it as an imperfection only. This, Beausobre says ‡, was a consequence of the opinion of matter being the source of all evil. Marcion also disapproved of marriage, and his disciples were also great fasters §. Manes said that concupiscence in general, or the love of the sexes, came from matter, was derived from the bad principle, and was therefore vicious in itself §.

\* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 141.

† Dissert. p. 213.

‡ Ib. p. 126.

† Vol. i. p. 360.

§ Vol. i. p. 463.

It was the opinion of Bardesanes, that Adam at first had no body, but what was subtle, and agreeable to his nature, and that he had a carnal body given him after his fall \*. According to Manes, marriage was the sin of Adam and Eve †. That the woman was the tree of knowledge, was the opinion of many of the Rabbins ‡. And Clemens Alexandrinus says, that the sin of Adam was his anticipating his commerce with Eve ||. Marriage, however, was not absolutely forbidden by the Manicheans; but only to the *elect*, while it was permitted to those they called *auditors* §.

In the very early times of christianity, the bishops and doctors, notwithstanding the warnings of the apostles on this very head, magnified *celibacy* to the skies, and vilified marriage as much \*\*. Justin Martyr believed that Christ was born of a virgin, to show that God could provide for the continuance of the human race, without the union of the two sexes. Austin was much inclined to the same opinion. He believed that Adam would never have known Eve, if he had continued immortal. Gregory Nyssenus held that, in a state of innocence, there would have been no *generation*, but that men would have been multiplied by some other means ††. And many of the Fathers were divided in their

\* Ib. p. 235. † P. 459. ‡ P. 461. || P. 463.

§ P. 474. \*\* P. 484. †† Dupin, vol. ii. p. 177.

opinion,

opinion, whether marriage was necessary to the propagation of the human race \*.

Justin Martyr says, that christianity has dissolved marriage, which lust had rendered criminal †. Origen says, that a man cannot approach his wife without defiling himself, and that this impurity does not permit a man to present himself before God, or pray to him. Methodius says, that since Christ has introduced virginity, the reign of the devil is destroyed ; whereas, before this enemy of the human race held it in captivity ; so that none of the ancients could please God. They were under the empire and dominion of their sins ‡.

That all this extravagance was derived from the philosophical notion of matter being the source of evil, is farther evident from the opposition that was always made to these notions by the *Ebionites*, who believed nothing of the philosophical doctrine. Beaufobre says §, that they did not approve of professions of continence, and were always in opposition to the others ||. He farther says of them, in this place, that they were chiefly Jews, educated in the belief of the unity of God, which they thought to be violated by the doctrine of the divinity of Christ \*\*.

\* Beaufobre, vol. ii. p. 465.

† P. 485.

‡ Beaufobre, vol. ii. p. 284.

§ Vol. i. p. 358.

|| P. 377.      \*\* P. 378.

Among other consequences of this system of the distinction between matter and spirit, and the doctrine of an intermediate state, depending upon it, we may reckon the Popish doctrines of *purgatory*, and the *worship of the dead*, concerning which I shall not, in this place, make any particular observations; contenting myself with only enumerating, from Beausobre, the various honours paid to the dead.

All the honours that the Pagans paid to the false Gods were paid to the martyrs in their relicks. They were carried in procession. Flowers were presented to them, which thereby contracted a miraculous virtue. Lamps were lighted before them. They were placed upon thrones in churches, in a high situation. People kissed them, the vases that contained them, the gates, the steps, and even the pavement of the churches dedicated to them. Festivals and feasts were appointed in honour of them. Wakes, or nocturnal devotions, in imitation of those for the dead among the Pagans, were instituted to them. Vows and offerings were made to them. Children were called by their names, and prayers were addressed to them \*.

It is remarkable, as is observed by Jortin, in his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* †, that the honours paid to the dead, and to

\* Vol. ii. p. 669.      † Vol. iii. p. 17.

the relicks of the martyrs, were set forward and supported, though not entirely, yet principally, by the Consubstantialists. Faustus the Manichean, reproaches the catholic christians with their endless superstitions of this kind, and tells them they were no better than humble imitators of the Pagan idolaters.

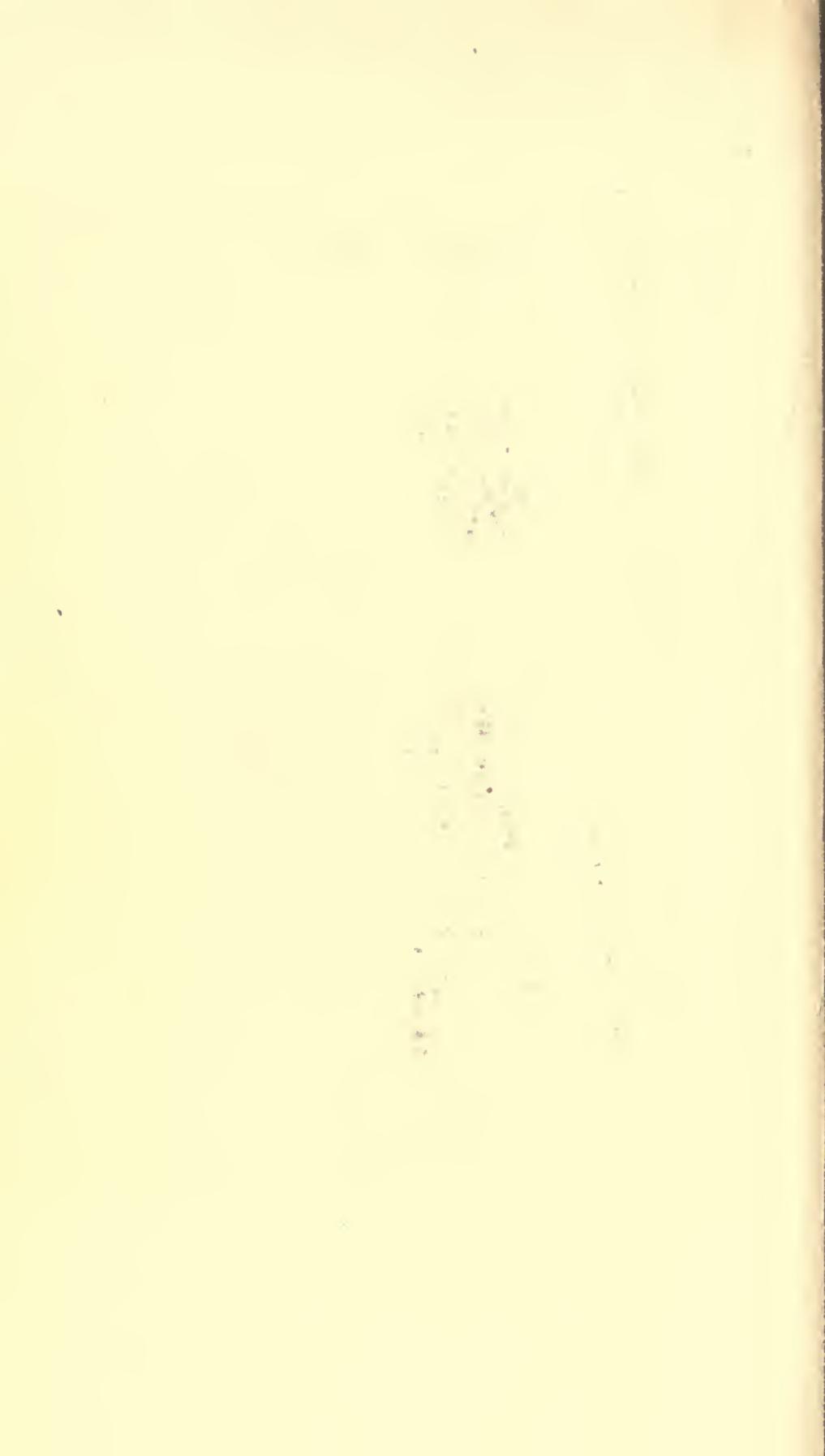
When, to all these gross corruptions of christianity, we add the doctrine of the *trinity*, with all its consequences, all flowing from the philosophical system introduced into our holy religion, I should think that a plain christian would rejoice in being able to throw off the whole immense load (which must otherwise sink the belief of it) by the easy supposition of *matter being capable of the property of sensation or thought*; an opinion which is so far from being contradicted by any appearance in nature, that it is perfectly agreeable to them all, and peculiarly favoured by the whole system of Revelation.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.









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